

Joseph L. Skvarenina Newspaper Article Collection, 1989-2025

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Joseph L. Skvarenina

Title

Joseph L. Skvarenina Newspaper Article Collection, 1989-2025

Language

Materials are in English

Abstract

The following is a collection of articles written by Joseph Skvarenina. Skvarenina served as the Hancock County Historian from 1992-2025. He was additionally involved in various history and service related organizations across the county. His research interest primarily consisted of local history matters, this includes: businesses, churches, local philanthropic organizations, schools, war veterans, the civil rights movement and minority events, recording oral histories, and the World Wars.

Access Restrictions

Collection is open for research.

Biographical Note

Joseph Skvarenina received his Bachelor of Science in Education and History and Master of Education degrees from Kent State University. He was employed at the American Cancer Society, the Christian Advocate, Lutheran High School, the National Benevolent Association, Habitat for Humanity, Center for Leadership Development, the Indiana-Kentucky Synod Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, and Ivy Tech Community College. Mr. Skvarenina wrote a weekly history article for the Greenfield Daily Reporter newspaper, published several books and articles, contributed to the Hancock County Historical Society's "Log Chain" newsletter, and served as Hancock County Historian from 1992 until his death in 2025.

While living in Hancock County, Skvarenina was heavily involved with local history organizations as both a member and officer. They include:

- Freetown Village, board member

- Greenfield Historic Landmarks, founding member

- Hancock County Historical Society, president

- Historic Cemetery Commission, member

Indiana National Road Association, board member
Riley Old Home Society, vice president
Shirley Historical Society, board member

For his service to his community, Skvarenina was awarded the key to the City of Greenfield by Mayor Keith J. McClarnon and was recognized by the Indiana General Assembly. He was also awarded the “Distinguished Hoosier” award by Indiana Governor Frank O’Bannon and the 2015 Hubert Hawkins History Award by the Indiana Historical Society.

Joseph Lee Skvarenina died on September 16, 2025 at the age of 77.

Arrangement

This collection is comprised of two sections, articles written from 1989-2001 and 2008-2025.

The “*Hancock County Connection and Yesterday Revisited* articles, 1989-2001” section features articles written from 1989-2001 that appeared primarily in *The Daily Reporter* and later in *The Ad News*. The collection was created in the form of scrapbooks for Skvarenina by local historian and genealogist Sue Baker. Articles are arranged as they appeared in the scrapbook. More information is available in that section.

Articles written from 2008-2025 appeared in *The Daily Reporter*. Articles are provided as they were sent to library staff prior to before editing and publication. They have only been formatted for this document. No changes have been made to text aside from some spelling corrections to aid in searching the document. Articles are arranged in descending chronological order by date of publication.

Administrative Information

Preferred Citation:

One may cite articles in citation format of ones choosing. The Library asks that if information was found through the use of this collection that proper credit be attributed. An example may include, “Courtesy of the Hancock County Public Library, Greenfield, Indiana” with a link to the collection.

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Updates

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Last updated: 2025-12-22

***Hancock County Connection and Yesterday Revisited* articles, 1989 to 2001**

The following dates and titles correspond to articles written by Joseph Skvarenina. They appeared primarily in *The Daily Reporter* (Greenfield, Indiana) under the column name “Hancock County Connection” and later in *The Ad News* (Greenfield, Indiana) under the column name “Yesterday Revisited plus other items.” In the first article of the series the newspaper states that “Hancock County Connection” was scheduled to be published the second Monday of each month on the Viewpoint page.

All dates and indexing information has been pulled from scrapbooks created by local historian and genealogist Sue Baker for Skvarenina. They comprise three volumes. Volume one spans March 1989 to December 1992, page 1 to 38. Volume two spans January 1993 to December 1995, page 39 to 75. Volume three spans January 1996 to 2001, page 76 to 98.

Each entry below is comprised of a title, date and page number. Titles are original to piece. If no title was present, column name was used. Dates used are ones provided by Sue Baker. Page numbers listed refer to the scrapbook page number. Page numbers are continuous through all three volumes. Articles are listed in order as they appear in scrapbooks.

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Joseph Skvarenina Articles, 2008 to 2025

2025-07-16

"Found Dead"

By Joe Skvarenina

Dan miller is writing a book about Park Cemetery and it sounds like it is going to be a block buster. Around 8 o'clock Sunday circa 1906 John Hawkins and Sam Breese found the body of a man lying on the brick walk at the rear of the "Office " saloon on West Main Street in Greenfield. It was Civil War veteran Isaac Coffey on furlough from the Soldiers Home in Dayton Ohio. He had been staying at the Guymon House on the north side of 40 and now an empty parking lot. Later he was taken to Morrison's to be prepared for burial. Morrison's Undertaking location another parking lot was on the south side of 40. He was on leave to visit a son at the time of his death. At the time there were four saloons in the area according to the Sanborn insurance maps. The addresses were 13 W. Main, 103 W. main, 119 W. Main, and 121 W. Main. The 119 W. Main is the Office Saloon. What do any of you know about the other establishments.

In addition, Park Cemetery as ordinally called New Cemetery. Park Cemetery is located on the east sde of State Road 9, Six blocks south of the court house square in Greenfield.

The original tract of six acres was covered by timber when it was purchased on 28 April 1863 by the City of Greenfield for \$450. The City Council adopted the plan and plat for laying off lots 7 April 1865.

History of Hancock County by J.H. Binford, states the 1882 condition of the burying grounds, "The plan of the grounds is good; but the drives or streets are unmade, and the grounds are unkept, unbecoming the dignity of the city."

Enough I have told you everything that I know and some things I don't. Talk to me at jskvarenina@hotmail.com, the Greenfield Daily Reporter or on Facebook at Joe's Hancock Historic Corner.

2025-07-09

Clarence Reger

By Joe Skvarenina

Linda Dunn writes, "As I've been going through some of the local papers, especially now tracking the life of Clarence Reger in Wilkinson, I noticed two things I've often been curious about: farmers were paid for labor of "gravel roads". I'm assuming this was for maintaining the gravel roads near their property. I am curious about how the county determined how much to pay each farmer. I can vaguely remember my father and some neighbors getting together near Fortville to not only add gravel, but also some black coating over it in front of the house. [Father was "picky". He was trying to reduce dust from people driving up and down the road... we lived near the open dump.] There are multiple entries for Clarence Reger being paid for "sheep killed" from the "dog fund". This appears to be a Brown Township fund and at least once, Clarence paid a "dog tax" of \$25. He also was once paid "12" for killing a fox. [I know this is not uncommon, I just hadn't paid much attention earlier.]

Farming has always been a dangerous occupation but this is the first time I've encountered researching and finding a death associated with it. Explicitly, Clarence's father-in-law. John Smith, 63, of near Markleville, was fatally injured when caught on the revolving shaft between a tractor and a corn picket at the farm of his son-in-law, Clarence Reger, near Wilkinson and died in St. John's hospital of a crushed chest and punctured lung. [The Union City Times-Gazette, 04

Clarence and Margaret had one son and he apparently led an interesting life quite different from most Hancock County folks. I hadn't expected to find a rodeo cowboy in Hancock County, Indiana. He left two descendants in the area, one of whom I could confirm graduated from Frankton in 2012 and the other was in charge of his estate in 2018 here in Hancock County.

Roy Gene Reger, 74, of Markleville, passed away peacefully at home surrounded by his family on October 8, 2017, after a short battle with ALS. Roy, known by many as "Ropin' Roy Reger", spent a great deal of time in Oklahoma throughout life, learning skills that would mould him into becoming one of the top calf ropers of his day. Calf roping was Roy's passion and he was a PRCA Gold Card holder for many years. Roy placed at some of the top rodeos of his day, including winning the calf roping event at the Fort Worth, Texas rodeo of 1978, among many others. Roy owned, trained, and finished several great calf horses, "Booger", "Missy", "Grey Eagle", "Wasp", "Trigger", and many in between. In Roy's later years he was a PRCA Rodeo Judge, judging predominately in Great Lakes Circuit rodeos. Roy also judged High School Rodeos, and enjoyed mentoring many young ropers. Roy hosted team roping competitions at his indoor and outdoor arenas in the 90's. He was also a skilled farrier, and spent time teaching the trade to his two children. Roy's fun-loving attitude, humor, infectious laugh and unbelievable life adventures will be remembered by all that knew him, loved him, and learned from him. Roy was preceded in death by his parents, Clarence and Margeret Reger of Markleville. Survivors include his life partner, Molly Gunason; son, Stetson (Lucy) Reger; daughters, Denise (Andy) Tatman;

and five grandchildren. In lieu of formal services, Roy's family and friends have made plans to share his cremated remains by horseback, in some of his most beloved places.

Enough. Talk to me. I have told you everything that I know and some things I don't.

2025-07-02

Charlottesville Friends

By Joe Skvarenina

What is a friend? There are several Society of Friends or Quaker Churches in Hancock County. The people who started these churches in Hancock County were probably from North Carolina at least initially. The Society of Friends began in England about 350 years ago under George Fox. These folks were dedicated to abolishing slavery and in most cases ran the underground railroad and were opposed to war and became conscientious objectors. The early Quakers had no designated person serving as a minister or used musical instruments in Worship.

The Charlottesville Friends Church was established in 1872 under the authority of Walnut Ridge monthly meeting. A meeting house was erected on the back of the current lot that year and was later moved to the front side of the lot. The church property was donated by William and Elizabeth Thornburg. The founding group of individuals met at Bundy's Broom Shop across the road from the church. In 1906 the church was moved so that the front door faced the west. Gas lights were added in 1891. In 1959 a basement was added. In 1970 a large addition was added to the church. In 1962 the first parsonage was purchased for \$800. This house was on east side north of railroad tracks. In 1962 a new brick parsonage was built north of US 40 on land donated by Harold and Lurene Hudson. For years the congregation sung with no musical instrument. In 1911 a pump organ was purchased and later a piano and electric organ were donated. Many two-week revivals were held through the years.

Enough. I have told you everything that I know and some things I don't. Talk to me at jskvarenina@hotmail.com, the Daily Reporter, or Facebook at Joe's Hancock Historic Corner.

2025-06-25

Irving Hunt

By Joe Skvarenina

Rich Horton in examining an old photo discovers a house near the Riley Park Well House and wonders if anyone know about it.

The Richman History of Hancock County Indiana tells us that just east of Swope Street stood the Morris Lineback property. In those days this was the last house in the corporate limits. The next home was on the north side of the National Road east of the Brandywine which was spanned by a covered bridge. This house stood about a quarter of a mile north of the bridge was the home of Irvin Hunt the first (African American) in Greenfield. At Mr. Hunt's home was the location of one of the best springs known in the community for a number of years. In fact, the spring was named Irvin spring by James Whitcomb Riley. In 1931 the Greenfield Federation of Women's Clubs constructed a well house and rock garden at the site of the Irving cabin. The well house and fountain were erected with the funds contributed by different clubs. The project committee for this endeavor included Miss Vernie Baldwin as Chairman, Mrs. Bruce Goble, Mrs. Bert Orr . Mrs. O.P. Eastes and Miss Kathryn Curry. The well house still in existence today was constructed of cracked stone and a red tile roof.

In 1915, Mr. Hunt was one of the 21 members of the reorganized 7th Day Adventist Church in Greenfield which in those days had a school with 10 pupils. Irvin would tell Riley and his friends ghost stories when they visited. I am sure that Hunt added a lot of local color to Riley's poetry. I do Believe that Riley wrote a poem about him.

Enough. I have told you everything that I know and some things I don't. Talk to me at jskvarenina@hotmail.com, the Daily Reporter or on Facebook at Joe's Hancock Historic Corner.

2025-06-18

Eden Church

By Joe Skvarenina

The photo is of the Eden General Store. The Eden community was platted August 21, 1835 by John L. Alford. The community had approximately 30 lots. Many small stores were connected in the town over the years. Orville Beaty was an early merchant. Lee Justice and Umberbrower's and Fuqua were later merchants. The above photo is their store.

The Westland store was located at 600 east and 200 south. The front stairs are still in the ground but the building is gone. Tom Freeman tells us when he was a kid, he and his friends would ride their bikes to the store for a warm bottle of soda pop. Yes, warm because the country stores usually didn't have refrigeration. When asked to write about Westland and Blue River Township naturalist Tubby Toms wrote Westland was the largest settlement in Blue River Township had at one time 25 residents. Around the turn of the century Westland had a general store, a blacksmith shop, and two natural gas wells. A mile west of the town was the first factory in the region and on the east banks of Nameless Creek as a watered power saw mill. A half mile north and a short distance east was where the first election was held in 1829 in Hancock County to elect a justice of the peace. Toms also told there were nine one room school houses in the township but with consolidation only Westland Consolidated School remained and it burned down in 1947. At the time Tubby indicated that 4 of the 9 buildings still remained and are still standing. These were being used as granaries and the fourth was a tool shed. Shiloh and Hardy's School are of brick and Jessup's and Gates are of frame construction. I don't know if these buildings still survive. At one time in the township there were a half dozen churches. Today Westland Friends and Shiloh still remain. Tom Freeman tells that Westland Store was also known as Landis Store.

Enough. I have told you everything that I know and some things I don't. Talk to me at jskvarenina@hotmail.com, the Daily Reporter or on Facebook at Joes Hancock Historic Corner.



Eden, back when: The town originally was called Lewisburg. It was platted in 1835 with 30 lots. The building pictured is the Umberbrower and Fuqua Store.

2025-06-11

Eden Church

By Joe Skvarenina

The following 100th anniversary of the Eden church was observed Sunday with all day services. Rev. Earl Leonard is the pastor of the church, which was founded in 1838. Ernest Warrum was re-elected president of the association and Euphima Murphin was re-elected secretary-treasurer.

An interesting history of the church and of Green Township was related by Mrs. Flora V. Curry, of Greenfield on October 19, 1938 In the Hancock County Democrat The 1938 article of Mrs. Curry is as follows:

In the year 1828 several petitioners of Hancock County petitioned the County Commissioners for the grant of a road commencing at the National road, which had previously been surveyed, thence north to Pendleton, the County seat of Madison County, and on to Andersontown. This petition was granted, the road surveyed and prepared for travel. The first land entered was in the northern part of Green Township, by Wm. Shortridge, in the year 1829. The year 1833 Green Township was organized, with thirty sections, and named for John Green, one of the first settlers. Not many families came from other states to the township and entered land, establishing new homes. Among them were the Allfords, Jarretts, Moores, Walkers, Fuquas, McKinseys, Wilsons, Barretts, Barnards, Hunts, Dawsons, Coopers, Hangers, Henrys, and Gosneys. The year 1835, on the banks of Sugar Creek, the town of Lewisburg was platted and surveyed by George Henry, consisting of twenty-nine lots, eight streets and four alleys. The main street to be three poles wide. The deeds to these lots were signed by John L. Allford, who had entered the land. Just east of Lewisburg the land was entered by Robertson Jarrett. In 1836 George Henry was licensed to sell foreign and domestic merchandise in Lewisburg, and built a small store building where the present store and masonic building now stand. The first physician at Lewisburg was Dr. Paul Moore. The first school house was north of Lewisburg, the school maintained by subscription, and the teachers "boarded round." They were Miss Eliza Moore, David McKinsey and George Henry. Green Township voted against free schools, but another vote was taken, which resulted in free schools and ten districts established. The first trustee was Meredith Gosney. The name Lewisburg was changed to Eden when Lewisburg became a post office, as another post office in Indiana was Lewisburg. In the year 1836 a circuit rider came into this community by the name of Steven Masters, and conducted meetings at the homes of Thomas Dawson, Robert Walker and Robertson Jarrett. In 1838, these members agreed to erect a log church. The place selected to build their new church was the high ground just east of Lewisburg and west of the new cemetery just laid out, and was given the name of Methodist Episcopal Chapel.

This new charge was made a part of the Greenfield circuit, and was supplied by the Greenfield ministers. The earliest ministers were Steven Masters, James Vess, Rev. Donaldson, Frank Richmond and James Leach. As time went on and more settlers came the church prospered, and in 1860 a new frame church was built, at a cost of \$1,500, and named Eden Methodist Episcopal Church. This church was dedicated by Rev. John S. McCarty. The Civil War called many of the church laborers to defend their union. Some returned, but many went to their reward. The frame

church remained the place of worship until the present church was erected in 1904. During this time many revivals were conducted. In the year 1885 and 1886 a revival conducted by class leaders continued all winter with many conversions and members added to the church. The "Amen Corner" was filled with faithful Christians, who inspired by God gave lasting testimonials to their Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Now we have no "Amen Corners" in our churches, just back pews. In the spring of 1904 a meeting of the membership was called by the pastor, Rev. J. W. Zerbe, and a subscription started for the erection of the present building, one half being subscribed before work was commenced. The building cost over \$8,600. The building committee was composed of Henry B. Wilson, David H. Baity, Irvan Barnard, Wm. Barnard, Elwood Barnard, Benton L. Barrett, John E. Barrett, John S. Spurry, Samuel Allford and Albert E. Curry. All of this committee have passed to their reward except Elwood Barnard. The church was dedicated Sunday, October 13, 1904, By Bishop J. H. Vincent and J. W. Zerbe, the pastor. During the day, Rev. J. O. Bills raised \$4,855 which covered the remaining debt. The Eden Methodist Episcopal church has been on different charges, first Greenfield, then Curry's Chapel and Mt. Carmel, with the parsonage at Eden. Next it was joined with Philadelphia, then put on the Fortville charge, with the parsonage at Fortville, Muncie district. Later on Fortville was made a point and Eden was put on the Ingalls circuit, with parsonage at Ingalls. Then Eden was changed to the Maxwell charge, Richmond district, with parsonage at Maxwell. After this Eden was on the Willow Branch charge, and made a two-point in 1938 charge, with parsonage at Willow Branch. Many pastors have served the congregation, the earliest ministers which have been listed. Then came Rev. Stabler, Rev. Black, Rev. Ramsey, Rev. Anderson, Rev. Powell, Rev. White, Rev. Lamb, Rev. Short, Rev. Tague, Rev. Bowers, Rev. Rogers, Rev. Bicknell, Rev. Girard, Rev. Feters, Rev. Slack, Rev. Lacy, Rev. Myers, Rev. Zerbe, Rev. Reynolds, Rev. Rhodes, Rev. Loveless, Rev. Black, Rev. Dawson, Rev. Duryee, Rev. Franklin, Rev. Caylor, Rev. Stone, Rev. Pierce, Rev. Mitchell, Rev. Hornaday, Rev. Rharick, Rev. Briggs, Rev. Johnson and Rev. Leona. Thanks to Greg Murphy for sharing this piece.

Enough. I have told you everything that I know, some things I don't. Talk to me at jskvarenina@hotmail.com, the Daily Reporter or on Facebook at Joes Hancock Historic Corner,

2025-06-04

The Museums at Riley Park

By Joe Skvarenina

The Hancock Historical Society was founded September 26, 1964, at the Presbyterian Church. Those present voted to proceed with a permanent organization. Mrs. Paul Ogg was Temporary Chairman. Two themes of the first meeting were the need for the Historical Society and History can be fun. Committee to select permanent officers included Mrs. Amy Rooney, Miss Bev. Montrose, Tom Williams, Lester Fiqua, and Paul Terrell. In 1963 the lighted display case at the hospital was the first activity. In it was exhibited Civil War items from the collections of CW Tidrow and John Sullivan. In 1966 June Williams started writing a column for the newspaper called Halcyon Hancock where we live the life of Riley. The Society has two museums, the Chapel in the Park and the Log Jail. The Log Jail museum was moved to Riley Park in 1967. This structure was built in 1853 on the south side of the public square according to the specification issued by the county commissioners. This structure was beside the gas company on South Street when moved to Riley Park. The move to Riley Park would have been the second move for the Log Jail. The interior and exterior are solid logs 12 inches thick. The walls and floors in the second-floor cell room are nailed with square nails about two inches apart. This was cheap security for those who wanted to see out. The cell doors were of heavy oak also filled with nails. When built the windows were barred. When constructed, it was intended to provide a jail without the use of expensive iron. The Chapel in the Park the former Philadelphia United Methodist Church was built in 1856. It was first moved to the site in 1906. It was moved again to Riley Park in June 1981. Marjorie Hughes Walker was the first President of the Hancock Historical Society. Later the Society had a lighted display case in the Hancock County Court House. In 1965 Bibles were exhibited in the case in the County Courthouse by the Historical Society. The Bibles illustrated different ages and languages in their texts. The Hancock County Historical Society in 1965 estimated that Hancock County had an average of one church every five or six miles.

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2025-05-28

Riley Park Shelter House

By Joe Skvarenina

Local historian Greg Roland shares with us information about the Riley Park Shelter House which is being rebuilt after the tragic fire.

Mayor James L. Allen set plans in motion to build a shelter in Riley Park so citizens had a place to gather with inclement weather during the summer of 1936. The construction was a WPA project. The City Council approved \$3,000 to pay for labor and supervision of the project. The city ended up spending \$3,500 to \$4,000 for this building. The WPA project carried an expense of \$3,000. C. Bert Orr, Charles Standish, Frank Guthier, James Moran and James Boring were the City Council members.

They purchased granite blocks which had been used beside the rails of the tracks of the Indianapolis Street Railway and use them in the walls.

The old structure caught fire on Dec. 28th, 2022.

Shelter house was dedicated On Thursday, October 7, 1937, to honor the Hoosier Poet on what would have been his 88th birthday. Governor M. Clifford Townsend, Dr. Herman B. Wells, acting president of the Indiana University, and many others joined with Greenfield residents in honoring the poet with the dedication.

George Ade, who was unable to attend because of ill health, and Booth Tarkington both wrote letters. The program opened in the new shelter house with Mayor James L. Allen welcoming the visitors and introducing Omer S. Jackson, state attorney general, who presided.

Clint Parker assisted in drawing the plans and was superintendent of construction and was on site daily.

The American City Magazine published in New York City under the caption "New Life for Cobblestones" reporter on the building of the shelter house. Their focus was on how the building relied on reusing cobblestones for the structure.

Cobblestone blocks from abandoned trolley tracks need not be discarded, according to the city officials of Greenfield, Indiana, who have used them to advantage in building a shelter in Riley Memorial Park. In Nearby Indianapolis the trolley company was installing trackless trollies and buses to replace the street cars. Mayor Allen approached them about the reuse of the cobblestones and a deal was struck for 1 ½ cents each and the city would haul them away. 12,000 cobblestones were purchased.

At about the same time the city had bought an old house which it intended to dismantle, using the land for expansion of the municipal electric light plant. From the house the rafters, joist,

sheeting was salvaged and used again in the construction of the shelter. The only expenses were the asbestos shingles, windows and sashes, paint, a few bricks, the wages for a good brick mason, and equipment for the interior of the shelter brought the cost of this simple but substantial structure to less than \$3,200.

Throughout the years the Shelter has been used for numerous gatherings and events. At first a \$2 fee was charged to rent the Shelter.

The original structure was 32' by 108' is divided into two small rooms and a large assembly hall. One of the small rooms serves as a kitchen and is equipped with electric stoves. The other small room is used to store kindling. In the large hall are two fireplaces, and sixteen large tables with benches. Electric fixtures add to the appearance as well as the usefulness of the shelter. A plywood ceiling and a concrete floor complete the building.

Enough. I have told you everything that I know and some things I don't. Talk to me at jskvarenina@hotmail.com, the Daily Reporter or on Facebook at Joses Hancock Historic Corner.

2025-05-21

Irvin Hunt

By Joe Skvarenina

Rich Horton in examining an old photo discovers a house near the Riley Park Well House and wonders if anyone know about it.

The Richman History of Hancock County Indiana tells us that just east of Swope Street stood the Morris Lineback property. In those days this was the last house in the corporate limits. The next home was on the north side of the National Road east of the Brandywine which was spanned by a covered bridge. This house stood about a quarter of a mile north of the bridge was the home of Irvin Hunt the first (African American) in Greenfield. At Mr. Hunt's home was the location of one of the best springs known in the community for a number of years. In fact, the spring was named Irvin spring by James Whitcomb Riley. In 1931 the Greenfield Federation of Women's Clubs constructed a well house and rock garden at the site of the Irving cabin. The well house and fountain were erected with the funds contributed by different clubs. The project committee for this endeavor included Miss Vernie Baldwin as Chairman, Mrs. Bruce Goble, Mrs. Bert Orr . Mrs. O.P. Eastes and Miss Kathryn Curry. The well house still in existence today was constructed of cracked stone and a red tile roof.

In 1915, Mr. Hunt was one of the 21 members of the reorganized 7th Day Adventist Church in Greenfield which in those days had a school with 10 pupils. Irvin would tell Riley and his friends ghost stories when they visited. I am sure that Hunt added a lot of local color to Riley's poetry.

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2025-05-07

Riley Park Pool

By Joe Skvarenina

It was in 1833 that the OLD Swimmin' Hole and "Leven More Poems" was published, but the discussion still goes on regarding the exact location of the site. According to some it was placed in Riley Park because no one really knew the location. Today a large stone identifies the spot in Riley Park of the Old Swimmin Hole.

A Riley Park swimming pool was officially dedicated with an opening ceremony on July 4, 1930. Speakers at the festivities included Mayor Arhtur Downing and former Mayors Ora Myers, S.G White. R.H. Monger, and William Dudding of the Park Board. Bert Foster was the builder and William Bintz was architect. On Sunday July 6, 577 people used the pool. It was closed in 1970 and eventually demolished. A new Greenfield swimming pool was dedicated in the summer of 1981 and still in use. I do believe that a model of the 1930 pool still exists.

Enough. I have told you everything that I know and some things I don't. Talk to me at the Greenfield Daily Reporter, jskvarenina@hotmail.com or on Facebook at Joes Hancock Historic Corner.

2025-05-07

Riley Park

By Joe Skvarenina

In June 1921 the Greenfield City Council ordered the Brandywine to be surveyed with the idea of establishing a park in the area of the old swimming hole. On Oct 7, 1925 there was a parade on the poet's birthday to dedicate the new Riley Park. According to the "Hancock County Democrat" newspaper Kiwanis was the leading cause of improving Riley Park, taking over this aspect from the City of Greenfield, if the City would purchase the grounds. The dedication consisted of a groundbreaking and shrub planting. The arrangements committee included Arhtur Downing, Omer S. Jackson, John F. Mitchell Jr., Will Hough, and Paul Binford. When the Park was established in 1925, three thousand children marched with a flower and flag. There were many floats and speakers. East Greenfield School won the prize of a new flag for 100% attendance. By the summer of 1928 Riley Park had become very popular. On one Sunday evening, five hundred people enjoyed reunions on the slopes. In February 1930, \$25,000 in bonds for the improvement of James Whitcomb Riley Park were sold to the Citizens Bank Of Greenfield. Greenfield Park Board members at the time included Ransom M. Monger(President), G Beemer Davis (secretary) , Walter M. McCole, Willian Dudding and Dr. Joseph L. Allen. On October 4 we will celebrate the 100th birthdate of Riley Park.

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2025-04-30

“The Poor”

By Joe Skvarenina

There will always be poor among us. At one time Hancock County had a poor farm. The Hancock County Poor Farm was purchased on June 5, 1866 as a shelter for the indigent and homeless. It was also called the county infirmary. Some of the residents were mentally ill. The "Binford History" tells us the poor farm was located on the National Road, two and half miles east of Greenfield, in section thirty-five, township sixteen north and range seven east. The superintendent's residence was a plain story and a half brick building. The infirmary building was a plank house built in the rear of superintendent's residence. According to Binford, "the building was not only cheaply constructed and poorly ventilated, but small and wholly inadequate to the demands of the unfortunate. In 1883 another building was planned. The home was constructed and the farm at that time was 217 acres with four acres being in garden with a variety of vegetables and two and one half in orchard. The new building had an administration building in the front with a two-story connecting wing in the rear. It closed around 1959. In 1942 it had 17 males and four females were present. Its published capacity was 32 males and 18 females. The building has since been torn down and I do believe that there is a law enforcement practice shooting range at the site. I have always wished I had gone in the old building.

I believe that it is totally reasonable to have a homeless shelter now for the people of Hancock County. Believe there are homeless people in Hancock County and I hope that I am never one of them under the present conditions in the community. Aren't we supposed to help the poor and homeless? Enough!

2025-04-23

Dr. Fletcher Writes about Dr. Rariden

By Joe Skvarenina

Do you know Dr. Mike Fletcher, he writes to us about Dr. L.B. Rariden. Dr Rariden was a Greenfield physician. He was born in Mitchell Indiana and graduated from the Indiana University School of Medicine in 1912. He served his internship at the Methodist Hospital. He practiced medicine in Brookston Indiana prior to World War I. He served overseas in the U.S. Army. He came to Greenfield in 1920. He practiced medicine in this city for thirty town years. He and Dr. Kinneman had medical office at 124 North State Street and the last two years at the New Building. They stayed at this location for twenty years. He was also on the staff at Methodist Hospital for thirty-two years.

Dr Rariden served as the first President of the medical staff at the Hancock Memorial Hospital. He was a member of the Hancock County Medical Society plus the Hancock Lodge No. F&AM, Scottish Rite, Murat Shrine, Elks, Greenfield Country Club, Kiwanis, Hancock County Medical Society, Baptist Church and other civic and professional groups. Dr Rariden even delivered Dr. Fletcher's mom.

It is also interesting to note that Doctors Smith, Kirby, Ferrell and Vingis all established practices in Hancock County after the War II. Captain Ted C. Kirby served aboard a hospital ship in the Pacific and went to medical school on the GI Bill and practiced in Greenfield as a family physician for fifty years. Dr. Ferrell served in the European theater as an infantryman and was then sent to the Pacific after V-E Day where he fought in the Philippine campaign. He attended medical school under the GI BILL and practiced family medicine in Greenfield until he retired. Both Dr. Vingis and Smith both served in Europe. Dr. Smith was with Patton's Third Army. What doctor stories do you know?

Enough. I have told you everything that I know and some things I don't. Talk to me at jskvarenina@hotmail.com, the Daily Reporter, or on Facebook at Joes Hancock Historic Corner.

2025-04-16

Straw Board Hill

By Joe Skvarenina

The Gas Boom period in town was, a period of great growth for the community. In the late 1800's Greenfield had two window glass factories, one fruit jar factory, one bottle factory., one rolling and nail mill, one gas engine shop, three printing and binding plants, one saw mill, one ice cream factory, and several brick yards on the edge of town. One brick yard was located at the current Hawks Tail Golf Club. One planning mill and fruit jar company were located on the west end of town. Owens Glass was located at the present west side Hardees. Most of these factories were located in the south end of town around the railroad depot. Most of these industries located in Greenfield for the free gas. In 1887 Greenfield had a Board of Trade that attempted to regulate the gas use saving some for residential home owners. The town also had two commercial clubs much like today's Greenfield Chamber of Commerce which promoted business coming to Greenfield. I found one reference to a stove company, the Home Stove Company moved to town in 1894.

Some tell me that the mounds at the Golf Course are brick slag from the old brick yard. Others tell me that every time you dig at the Hardees on west side you find glass from the bottle company. Also, at the top of the hill on Route 40 and Apple Street was once called straw board hill because the waste paper from the paper mill which was discharged in the creek. Tom Macy claims a brickyard was on the south side of 40 but on the side of the hill south of the railroad. The bricks from the brick yard was used to pave the streets in town. The pits used to dig the clay for the bricks are still visible. These pits are located near the old fairgrounds which was out by Hawks Tail.

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2025-04-09

The One Room School

By Joe Skvarenina

The first school house in Hancock County erected specifically for educational purposes was built in Blue River Township in 1823 on the northwest quarter of section 36, township 15. and range 7 and the second in Greenfield later. But there are records of pioneer schools held in other buildings as early as 1820. This one room log schools were financed on a subscription basis. Parents paid \$1.00 to \$2.00 per student frequently in farm produce. The school term was 10,12, or 13 weeks. Until 1859 school business was conducted by the township trustees. Section 16 of each township was set-aside for the maintenance of schools. One of the important functions of township trustees was to divide each civil township into school districts. The operation of the local district was managed by three individuals. In 1865 there were 87 schools in Hancock County, none of them graded. By 1873 there were 89 schools, in 1900 ,67; and in 1915 there were still 32 one room school houses in the county plus a number of graded schools and high schools. Today there are 16 school buildings in Hancock County

In 1915-16 Blue River Township was the only township which completely consolidated the one room schools but there were still 33 schools in the county with 1 teacher. Two years prior to WW I Hancock County had 11 school corporations operating 52 schools. Today there are 16 school buildings in Hancock County.

.It is interesting to note that students in the olden days didn't have to go far in the rain and snow to get to the one room school, 89 in 1873. Another legend debunked.

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2025-04-02

Military Action

By Joe Skvarenina

The county's Memorial Building is located at the corner of North and East Street's in Greenfield. At one time a poultry yard was at the location. I have seen plans for putting in an elevator at the site. That's a good idea because of the buildings use by many local groups including the veterans. The Memorial building was dedicated September 30, 1923. Inside the building is a plaque which recognizes the Woodrow Wilson and the WW I veterans of this county who gave the supreme sacrifice. Originally the second floor was devoted for use by the American Legion and Auxiliary. The ground floor was used for agricultural lectures. Taylor Morford, Civil war veteran and a member of the GAR (Grand Army of the Republic) laid the cornerstone. For a long time, there were WW I cannons as war trophies were on the front lawn.(You can still see the concrete pads that the cannon rested upon in the lawn). One was a large Austrian howitzer and the other a small German field piece. On October 16, 1942 they were removed from the Memorial Building to be used a scrap to mold into new weapons for WW II. For years the Memorial Building was the center of Veterans Activities in the community. Also, many local high school basketball games were played at the site. Jerry Ramsey says that the gym at the Memorial Building was the home gym for Eden school. His dad told him the east basket has a dead spot. Anybody else find this to be true?

One of WW II worst tragedies In Hancock County occurred March 20, 1942 on Charles Gants' farm three miles north of Greenfield directly north of Moore's Repair. Members of the crew were killed. The big plane sheared through the trees and was torn to bits. The plane was on a routine flight to Dayton Ohio No announcement was ever made on the cause of the accident. I am told that you van still pick up parts in the field.

One cannot help recognizing the many valiant nurses that served our community home and aboard. One was Nellie Baldwin who volunteered for service in WW I as a Red Cross nurse on the front lines of Europe later to return to Greenfield to teach Latin. Linda Comestock Teal brings to our attention Rebecca Katherine C Caraway, another WWI nurse from Sugar Creek Township who was born in 1870. Her father was a school teacher and they lived on a farm in ther Philadelphia area. Ms Caraway was a member of the Army Nurse Corp. Before she joined the Nurse Corp she worked for the Boston Floating Hospital. She died in 1964 at the age of 93 probably one of the older veterans from those days. She received a full military funeral. Linda says they called her Aunt Kate.

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2025-03-26

Pearl Harbor

By Joe Skvarenina

Thanking people is important, especially the veterans who have served this country so well. I have been told that the WW II effort required seven support troops for every one man engaged in combat. Many were placed in harm's way without being actively engaged in the action. Combat changed people's lives and they cannot be repaid no matter the theater.

Do you remember Earl Moore. M/Sgt. Earl E. Moore despite having vision in only one eye, was drafted and sent to England in early 1941. He served as a dock master in Southampton during the V-bomb attacks and in June 1944 he loaded troops for the invasion of France including his brother-in law who was later killed in action. Do you remember Vic DeMarco's shoe shop. Pfc. Vic DeMarco came to Greenfield shortly after the war. During WW II he was an infantryman with the 45th Division. He fought through the Italian Campaign and liberated the town from which his parents emigrated to the United States. Seaman Dick Pickett served in the Alaskan theater aboard a patrol boat during the campaign to retake the Aleutian Islands captured by the Japanese. Sgt Ed Ramsey, commonly known as good old Ed Ramsey, was a machine gunner that recaptured Kiska during the Alaskan campaign. He was awarded a bronze star. Sgt. Ted Hall served the Marine Corp at the invasion of Iwo Jima. All marines were trained as infantryman. He was one of two survivors of his entire company. Pfc Oakley Brooks was an infantryman in the European Theater. He was shot in the mouth by a machine gun and lost most of his tongue. A carpenter after the war, he rarely spoke to anyone because his speech was garbled and it embarrassed him. Sgt. Bob Mills served in the European theater in a Sherman tank which was inferior to the German Tanks-known as a "flaming coffin." Capt. Dick Keck was a c-47 pilot in Europe. He was in the air transport command in Italy. Lieutenant Maxine Ward served as a nurse in the Pacific. She was one of two nurses who made the "Merrill's Marauder's" march behind enemy lines in Burma. She raised her family in Greenfield and worked as a nurse at the Hancock Co. Hospital. Sgt. "Shakey" Binford was an infantry man who served in Korea. Sgt. Virgil Williams was Greenfield's only Pearl Harbor Veteran. There was also Lt. Chuck Osborne, Cpl. Ray Williams and Sgt. Leon Davis. Of course, Mike Ebert who served in Nam. More than likely many more who deserved our thanks. Do you know of others?

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2025-03-19

Veterans Photos

By Joe Skvarenina

Michael Kester reports, "I attended the Hancock Co. Commissioner's meeting Tuesday, by invitation. I was on the agenda to speak for the HCHS to acquire the photos of the WWII vets that have been displayed on panels at the courthouse in 1942 and ultimately moved to the Memorial Building basement in 1947.

Bill Spalding was instrumental in making this acquisition happen for us. I have picked up the photos from the Courthouse Annex basement, via Cory Taylor, Facilities Manager. There are over 910 original photos. All of them have already been scanned by City employees, specifically, Dave Goodrich, who is in the IT department at the McClarnon Bldg.. Dave's small team acquired them to keep them safe and digitized all of them/had a website to view them/then website was gone... There were 14 panels with 70 photos on each one." Other members of the team included Dave's wife Denise Goodrich and Jim McWhinney. These WW II photos were in the basement of the Memorial Building for many years."

I did an interview in 1993 with Will Scheiter, Dale Kuhn, Ed Ramsey and Richard Rodebeck and some other Legionnaires on the history of the local American Post #119 the interview tells that, "Edgar Ridlen World War I Post Commander got each picture of World War II veterans and made a frame of the 70 pictures and put it done in the Memorial Building. He ended up with 960 WW II veteran hanging downstairs in the Memorial Building." Dale Kuhn added that they were first displayed at the County Courthouse.

The American Legion was chartered in Greenfield in 1919. The first meeting was held in the Knights of Pythias Building which was recently a restaurant on North State. The first Club Room or bar was above Pickett's hardware which is a pizza shop. The Post actually met in a suite of offices in the Memorial Building which was there home until 1950-51. At that time they build a post on American Legion place. This site eventually became the county annex. William e. Bussell was a lawyer and Bill Wolf's law partner. He was originally appointed in 1919 and he served for a short time in the new year. He was then elected the first commander of the Post. He served went out of office in 1920. Some say that Captain Henry C. Gemmil did the initial work of laying down the foundation. He was a great organizer and a WW I veteran. One of the first thing the American Legion did was start the American Legion Junior Baseball program and the old Sprinkling Can contest. The local American Legion was heavy into youth endeavors in the community.

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2025-03-12

West Liberty

By Joe Skvarenina

In the early days West Liberty was a community of 16 houses, some stores and a tavern. It was platted April 8, 1823. West Liberty was partially located in Rush County. West Liberty was $\frac{3}{4}$ of a mile south of Knightstown. By 1826 William Winkoop opened a log tavern at the site. Other merchants in West Liberty included Aaron Maxwell, Allen Hiatt and Robert Woods who ran a grocery. Bicknell Cole was the first postmaster. The Maxwell's store was a single room log cabin and a family residence. It housed his stock of goods and a whiskey barreBut with the coming of the National Road and the founding of Knightstown, West Liberty, located along the old Centerville Road, decayed and eventually disappeared. Nothing is at the site. Dr. Joseph Elliott was the first physician in the area

The Charles A Beard School system is headquartered in Knightstown. I believe that it is the only school corporation that is in two counties, Henry and Rush. But who was Charles Beard? He was born in 1874 near Knightstown and died 1948. He wrote one book, "The Economic Interpretation of the Constitution" in 1937. He was a opponent of Franklin Delano Roosevelt and a proponent of American economic self-sufficiency.

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2025-03-05

Civilian Conservation Corps

By Joe Skvarenina

My father enrolled in the Civilian Conservation Corps at Downey Idaho. He planted trees. The CCC was one of the many federal alphabet soups agencies that Franklin Delano Roosevelt created to lift this country out of the Great Depression. The CCC also called the tree army employed young men throughout the country on conservation projects and gave them a pay check along with room and board. They were required to send a \$25 of their \$30 paycheck back home to their families. When WW II began these young men enlisted in the military. Up and until 1942 75% of the trees planted in the United States was done by the CCC. in 1935 the CCC employed 500,000 young men and WWI veterans

In the summer of 1934 James Powers, Charlottesville ; Ray Crowell, Shirley; Paul Richey, Ray Epperson, Charles Myers, Clarence Thornberry, and George Carson of Greenfield enrolled in the CCC. Did you know that there was a CCC training camp at Fort Benjamin Harrison? the buildings are still there and it was called Camp Glenn. Maybe the Hancock County Boys enrolled at this site. In fact the Indiana District Headquarters for the CCC was established at Fort Benjamin Harrison or Camp Glenn in 1933. At Camp Glenn Army officers provided administrative and planning support to distant camps located Indian State Parks, State Forests and Game Reserves. The headquarters also oversaw the rotation of Indiana enrollees to and from work camps in the Western United States..By 1938 39,000 young men passed through Camp Glenn. Later Camp Glenn was used as a prisoner of war camp form 1944-1945. Many of the building at Fort Benjamin Harrison were built with prisoner of war labor.

The building at Camp Glen still stand and there is a small museum at the site. The location is the riding stables were I took all six of my grandchildren riding. It coats \$5 to get into the Fort Harrison Park. Enough I have told you everything that I know and some things I don't. Talk to me.

2025-02-26

All Aboard

By Joe Skvarenina

One reader wants to know about the train wreck in McCordsville in 1903. This was a hard one to find because it really happened December 26, 1902, not 1903. I also had to call the troops, Paul McNeal, local history expert at the Hancock Public Library and Chris Marshall at the Indiana Historical Bureau. It was reported in the January 1, 1903, Hancock County Democrat. It seems that Union Traction limited #223 ran into the private car "Martha" which belonged to George McCutlock, President of the Traction Company. The private car was named after McCutlock's daughter Martha. The tragedy happened at a switch east McCordsville. Eight people were injured, and one was killed. Barlett Frazier the motorman had both feet crushed and later died of his injuries. This anyone else about the know wreck. The damage to the Martha was about \$15,000.

Linda Comstock Teal also writes, 'I read your article on the train wreck in September of 1956 and I remember it well. I was 9 years old and lived at 427 N. East St. The smell was almost overwhelming, and we were several blocks away. My grandparents lived on West South Street where the parking lot is now. They were in the upstairs apartment of the Leonard Shively (I believe that was his name, I know he had the Shively Dairy) house. I do not recall if they were evacuated, but they probably were. My grandfather died of cancer in 1966, but whether it was related to the toxicity of the wreck is unknown. I do remember that for years afterwards when it rained you could still smell the chemicals that were in the ground.' Linda also adds, "I enjoy reading your column each week. My husband and I have just moved back to Greenfield after a long hiatus and it has been fun catching up." Train wrecks or other accidents were a common occurrence during the heyday of the railroad. Railroads were important to the growth of Hancock County. For example, the Shirley Creosote Company was located one mile north of Shirley. On July 4, 1906, John Gordon, an employee of the plant, was electrocuted when he stepped on the 'third rail' which provided current to pull the cars of the railroad ties. In 1943 a train wreck tore away both ends of the Greenfield railroad station scattering freight and wreckage for almost three blocks and halting traffic for 12 hours. Rails were twisted and torn from the ties for almost three blocks. Riley Avenue and Pennsylvania Streets crossings were blocked. The mishap occurred shortly before 8 p.m. Saturday evening. The train was a westbound freight approximately 80 cars. It took 100 men to restore the tracks for rail traffic. On January 30, 1963, 30 boxcars of an Indianapolis bound freight train were jerked off the tracks and stacked up in block-long pile-up when the axle assembly broke at Greenfield. A railroad official said the damages would cost about \$500,000. The broke axle occurred on the 25th car of a 105-unit train.

These early train wrecks had much to do with the closure of the line and the poor condition of the tracks. As late as 1973 Greenfield business had as many as 600 freight cars haul shipments into town. But Penn Central still closed the local freight office. Farm Bureau Co-Op and other shippers expressed concern to no avail. All aboard!!

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2025-02-19

Trains

By Joe Skvarenina

When Hancock County was founded in 1828 the main mode of transportation was the National Road which came thru the county 1834-35. The railroad era didn't arrive in the county until 1853. The railroad helped transform Greenfield into a thriving community by 1890 of 2013 residents. Both electric and steam went thru the county. By 1900 the interurban (electric) passenger line began running from Indianapolis to Richmond. The Interurban line was operated by Terre Haute, Indianapolis and Eastern connected the vast power systems of central Ohio and Indiana. The steam route was the Pennsylvania Railroad-mainline Pittsburg to St. Louis. which was a prominent passenger and freight route. A March, 1913 severe flood damaged the PRR bridge over the Brandywine and flooded the National Road and the Trolley Lines marked the beginning eclipse of rail service. The public depended less on rail service. In 1948 Harry Truman campaign train made a stop in Greenfield. In 1952 passenger trains made their final stops in Greenfield but streamliners like the "Spirit of St. Louis" continued to go thru the community for another decade. In 1968 the PRR merged with the New York Central to form the Penn Central. The " Spirit" became part of Amtrak in 1971 and joined the James Whitcomb Riley, and George Washington going thru Greenfield in 1973. Riley's trek across Greenfield ended in 1974. In 1977 the Riley was renamed the Cardinal. Eventually trains were diverted from Greenfield because of track problems. The opportunity to operate freight trains thru Greenfield ended in 1981 when the abandonment of the tracks 21 miles east of Charlottesville became fact.

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2025-02-12

(Title)

By
Joe Skvarenina

In 1929 the entire nation suffered one of the greatest economic shocks in history with the crash of the stock market and the closure of the banks. Millions of Americans lost their jobs and joined bread lines across the nation. The President at the time, Herbert Hoover, had a hands-off approach that did little to right the economy. As a result most Americans believed like the Tennessee Valley Association and starting agencies like the Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation. But the first New Deal showed only modest results. In 1935 FDR realized he needed to do more to win the 1936 presidential elections so Roosevelt proposed the second round of programs called the Second New Deal. Congress passed and FDR signed the Social Security Act, Works Progress Administration, Wagner Act, Rural Electric Administration Act plus others. By 1930 90% of city dwellers had electricity while 9 out of 10 farmers had none.

The Rural Electrification Administration was created by Executive Order as an Independent Bureau in 1935. In 1936 Congress authorized the Rural Electrification Act. In 1939 REA was reorganized as a Division of the Department of Agriculture charged with administering loan programs for electrification and telephone services in rural areas. 90% of urban dwellers had electricity by the 1930's only 1 out of 10 farmers did. By 1939 the REA had helped to establish 417 coops serving 288,000 households. By 1939 25% of the rural households had electricity. Ninestar is a product of the Rural Electrification Administration. Mr. Roosevelt had a last effect on this country

In 1940 Claude Wichard from Delphi in Carroll County was Roosevelt's Secretary of Agriculture. In 1946 became the Chief of the REA. He made at least

two appearances as REA boss in Hancock County one being at an annual meeting which was held at the Weil Theater.

When FDR died in 1945, 9 out of 10 farms were electrified. Enough. Talk to me at jskvarenina@hotmail.com, the Daily Reporter, or on Facebook at Joe's Hancock Historic Corner.

2025-02-05

Digging It

By Joe Skvarenina

Jim Bruni from California writes. " The memory of one of my favorite childhood toys was sharpened when I saw one in an antique shop. The toy itself was called the 'The Giant Sand Digger. The stencil on the toy was only partly visible. The company's title consisted of three names, the first being 'Sparks'. The manufacturer was in Greenfield, Indiana. The toy was made of sheet metal bonded to the front cab. A crank on one side of the cab was used to raise and lower the bucket. Another crank controlled in & out movement. It was a very sophisticated toy. The cab pivoted 360 degrees on its base. It was just like the real thing." It was made after WW II since Jim Bruni got it for Christmas. Did his parents get it from a store like Sears and it was mass produced? Did the company manufacture other toys? Jim's family lived in Wisconsin during the time of parental purchase.

Do any of you know of a Sparks who manufactured 'Diggers' in Greenfield Indiana or any other toys? Did Sparks run ads in catalogues. Was Sparks bought out by another company. Let's solve this mystery. for Mr. Bruni.

I have a large comic book collection when I was a kid, and did like to trade them. I don't know if comic books are so popular with today's youngsters. I used to really like the 'Lone Ranger', 'Donald Duck' along with the ' Archie Comics.' I know that in earlier generations they had dime novels. My friends and I read many 'Hardy Boys' and the girls read 'Nancy Drew' books. Do kids still read these books today? I knew I have picked up some in the 1940's and 1950's that are considered collectible. Oh my, my childhood toys are now antiques.

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2025-01-29

Col Wired

By Joe Skvarenina

NineStar traces its roots back to the founding of the McCordsville Telephone Company in 1895. It is the parent company of Hancock Telecom. In 1895, Loren Helms, a telephone factory worker, strung a wire across a back fence from his mother's house to the home of his sister, Mrs. Charles Peal and installed the first telephones in the community. Soon, three neighbors (Hiram Dunham, James Thomas, and Robert Wilson) joined the line, and a company was born. Similar community ventures between 1900 and 1903, led to the formation of four other telephone companies in Hancock County – the Maxwell Telephone Company, the Mohawk Telephone Company, the Eden Telephone Company, and the Willow Branch Telephone Company. All these companies started with somewhere between 12 and 25 customers.

1930s

The idea of electric lights on Hancock County farms seemed a distant dream in 1934, when Hancock County Farm Bureau President John T. Wilson of Green Township first brought up the idea at a meeting. During the fall of that year, the Indiana Farm Bureau Cooperative Association led an initiative to establish the Indiana Rural Electric Act which was passed by the Indiana General Assembly in 1935. That law provided for a charter and franchise for cooperative corporations to provide electricity to unserved areas of the state.

On August 14, 1935, an organizational meeting of 39 people from various Hancock County townships was held at the Memorial Building in Greenfield, to establish the Hancock County Rural Electric Membership Corporation (REMC). Fifteen incorporators signed the Articles of Incorporation, and seven directors were elected to the Board: John T. Wilson, president (Green Township); Claude Grist, vice president (Buck Creek Township); Russell Cushman, secretary (Vernon Township); Frank L. Marsh, treasurer (Center Township); W. Roy Hasler (Brown Township); L.H. Collins (Jackson Township); John S. Bentley (Blue River Township). At the beginning of 1936, residents in unserved areas were solicited to become members of the new cooperative. By March 16, 968 people had become members. April 21, the Articles of Incorporation were filed with the Secretary of State and the following day an application was filed with the Indiana Public Service Commission (now known as the Indiana Utility Regulatory Commission). The Articles of Incorporation were approved May 22, and the Hancock County REMC was officially created. The first loan from the REMC was \$325,000 made November 22, 1936. Bids for line construction were accepted in April. During the summer months of 1937, REMC approved funds of \$41,600.41 for the construction of lines on Hancock, Shelby, Marion, Johnson, Bartholomew, and Decatur counties. The first pole was set November 1, 1936, on the Charles Brandle Farm in Vernon Township. First miles of line energized were 325 miles. The first homes energized were on May 17, 1938, due west of Willow Branch. The individuals energized were George Seal and Noble Watson. The number of homes energized was 815. The average price of electric bills when the co-op first began was \$3. Price per kwh of electricity when the co-op was first organized – the first kwh was \$0.075, the next 30 kwhs for \$0.05, the next 170 kwhs for \$0.03, and all over 230 kwhs for \$0.02 per kwh. The average members per

mile when first energized was 2.4. The first headquarters was located at 12 West Main Street in the Greenfield Arcade Building. Miss Martha Ellen Boland was the secretary in charge of the office. "Soon electric lights will blaze from the farmhouse windows where for years the only illumination was the subtle light of kerosene lamps...food will be kept fresh and pure in electric refrigerators ... food will be cooked perfectly on electric ranges...cows will be milked by electric machines and cream will be separated electrically or be churned electrically and electricity will pump a pure supply of water into modern bathrooms. The progress of modern convenience will be enjoyed in farm homes of Hancock County.

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2025-01-22

(No Title Provided)

By Joe Skvarenina

Greg Murphy writes, "I am a little slow responding to "More on Mohawk" however, I do remember the party lines; picking up the phone to call and hearing your neighbors having a conversation (VERY interesting!). I knew Olive DESHONG Duncan, husband Ralph and their son Jim Duncan. I also knew Grace Brinker and recall her daughter Ella Marie Brinker." Greg I remember party lines also and how some people would never get off the phone.

The original plat of Mohawk was made on January 25, 1883 by Catherine and Adam F. Wilson. I am sure it was called Mohawk because of the Indian village at the site long ago. Today it is a small town which has seen businesses come and go. At different times there have been grocers, hardware dealers, and a drug concerns in Mohawk. In the past there was a post office maintained with no rural routes. The Mohawk Bank, a private institution was organized September 1, 1913 with the capital of \$12,000 was later bought out by Hancock County Bank & Trust which today is PNC. The location of the old Mohawk State Bank and the Hancock Bank and Trust are still there. The Lenape tribe No. 224 of the Improved Order of Red Man was organized at Mohawk on May 9, 1896. After the railroad was constructed McConnell & Wilson erected a grain elevator which burned. Later Newman and Barnard erected another one called the Mohawk Elevator which is now also gone. In addition a saw mill was established in 1880 and later operated by Oliver A Newman and his son Frank, under the name of the Mohawk Lumber Company. In 1909 the company was rebuilt after a fire and eventually went into the construction of Greyhound vans and truck bodies. The Mohawk Methodist church started out as a Evangelical United Brethren Church. This church on the Buck Creek side was organized in 1894 with the present structure being erected in 1896. Mohawk is both in Buck Creek and Center Townships.

The most famous citizen's of the area was Rev. Lorenzo Dow. Some early publications describe him as a truly both pious and eccentric. In 1826 the Recorder's office shows that Dow entered the north-west quarter of section thirty-five in township sixteen north, in range five east, containing one hundred and sixty acres which when entered was part of Madison County but is now in Buck Creek Township. It was reported that Dow lived on his entry for a short time in a bank of the Buck Creek about 10-12 feet high on the farm where he dug a cave in which to live. Dow a Methodist preached in Greenfield.

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2025-01-15

(No Title Provided)

By Joe Skvarenina

Dennis Fisk, Senior want to know why there are medians in the middle of Spring and East Street before you get to the hospital property, Dennis these were the entrance streets to the Hancock County Fairgrounds and on those medians would be places for signs and for people to hawk their wares.

Charlie White shares with us information about the County Fair that was in the July 17, 1957 Daily Reporter. It seems there was a dump at the 4-H Fairground north of Riley Park which was closed on July 20th until after the Fair. This according to the article will "enable the conditions at the new fairgrounds to be as pleasant as possible during fair week." I didn't know that there was a dump in that area? I know the old city dump was by the FOP on Davis Road. The county's first agricultural society was organized June 1835 at the Hancock County Courthouse. But the first agricultural society of which we have a definite history was organized in 1856 for the purpose of conducting county fairs. The first county fair was held in Greenfield in 1856 at the east end of town north of the National Road. In 1857 the fair was held on the south side of the railroad tracks near Brandywine Creek on land belonging to Samuel Milroy. A fire destroyed the floral Hall in 1871. The hall was never rebuilt. The last fair at this site was held in 1879 at this location. On December 21, 1885 Boyd's Grove north of Greenfield was selected as the fairground site. This is the current hospital property. When they built the hospital they came across the foundations of the horse barns at the back of the property.

Did you know that William Jennings Bryan came to Greenfield on July 27, 1899 and spoke at the Hancock County Fairgrounds which would be the current site of the Hancock Regional Hospital. It is estimated that the crowd which attended was 20,000. Bryan ran for President against William McKinley in 1904 and William Howard Taft in 1908. Of course, both times he was defeated. In fact Mr. Bryan made several unsuccessful bids for the presidency, His nickname was the great "Commoner" and he was a democrat, Bryan again visited Greenfield in June 1903. He made two speeches-one on the east side of the Court House and another was at Gant's Opera House. The site of Gant's is the old Holt's Motors on North Street across the street from the old library or Carnegie's. He lost Indiana.

Enough. I told you everything that I know and some things I don't. Talk to me at jskvarenina@hotmail.com, the Daily Reporter or on Facebook at Joe's Hancock Historic Corner.

2025-01-08

Hancock County Hoopsters

By Joe Skvarenina

Do you like to watch basketball? I do, especially IU and Purdue. As a typical Hoosier, I would like to be known as a rabid basketball fan. Basketball players in the early days did not have the same luxurious settings as today's teams. In 1918 one of the many early games in Greenfield were played in Hinchman's Hall, the second story of the Hinchman Grocery Store and Wagon Works. This building is now the Butler Soup Kitchen. There were big posts in the hall which the players learned to avoid and play around. The posts are still upstairs with a basketball floor and concession stand.

The first Greenfield High School Basketball team made its appearance in 1915. This first game played was against Mount Comfort Buccaneers. The location of the gym was a large building on North State which had been a tabernacle used by Christian Churches for revivals. Later the school board purchased it for a gym. The site probably the current location of the gun shop. At that time Greenfield team was known as the Greenfield Tigers. The Greenfield Tigers and Mt. Comfort Buccaneers which had just been a team for just three sessions prior locked in battle on the court. Mt. Comfort turned away the Tigers. The Greenfield team entered the district tournament with only six players that season and lost to Hartford 42-5. Hartford was the eventual winner of this tournament. Greenfield players included Hilligoss, Morton, Rhodarmer, Willman and Manon. This was the first team.

In 1910 Greenfield High School also had a football team. It tried for State Championship but was defeated by Brownsburg 32-0. Later in the season Greenfield trounced New Castle 44-0. In 1911 Greenfield High School had it's first baseball team.

Enough. I have told you everything that I know and some things I don't. Talk to me at jskvarenina@hotmail.com, the Daily Reporter or on Facebook, Joe's Hancock Historic Corner.

2025-01-01

A Place to Sleep

By Joe Skvarenina

One reader writes." Enjoyed the article in the Reporter about motels in Hancock County. I have lived in western Hancock County all of my 68 years. I have never heard of a motel that was associated with Buckley's restaurant. That used to be the place to eat in the 50's and early 60's since larger restaurants were few and far between. The building is actually Cumberland, Marion County and is still in use today as Sero's restaurant as you probably know. There have been other businesses in that building. The infamous Wild Blue Kangaroo bar was there for a while as well as an insurance agency as I recall. The Ross Motel is now Sugar Creek Nursing and Rehab center. It was bui on land that was purchased from my grandfather that he owned and farmed. My aunt and uncle were resident managers in the 1950's

Another reader says that Buckley's was where Sero's is in Cumberland.

Lin Parson's tells that Buckley's closed in the the late 1960's and in the early 1970's the Wild Blue Kangaroo was in the building . He goes on to add the Hoosier Poet was US 40 and 600 East range Line Road. Also, the Howard Hughes was located across from the Sweet shop. Lin doubts Buckley's had a motel at least in the 1940's.

Do you remember Ruth Harper? She was the first woman to serve in the role of County Assessor but did you also know that she was the first women Justice of the Peace ever appointed in Indiana history. It was in 1951. Other notable women include Irene Kramer who was the first women to serve as Hancock County auditor in 1978. Pat Elmore was the first woman to be elected as County Clerk in 1966.

Enough. I have told you everything that I know and some things I don't. Talk to me at JSkvarenina@hotmail.com, the Daily Reporter, or on Facebook, Joe's Hancock Historic Corner

2024-12-25

A little history about the "Hitching Chain"

By Joe Skvarenina

Greg Murphy writes, "I want to share a photo with you of the old "hitching chain" that was located in Mohawk. I remember it well; it was located along the west side of Mohawk road (200W) just south of where the railroad tracks ran through town and beside the road that went back to the Mohawk elevator.



My grandparents, Paul and Opal (Maroskey) Murphy, were founding members of Hancock County Historical Society. They donated the old "hitching chain" to the HCHS probably in the late 60s or early 70s. As you know, It is located along Apple street beside the Old Log Jail. My dad, Forest Murphy 1919-2005, wrote his memories of Mohawk (22 pages), he titled it "Thinking of the past and memories of the past, and things told to me", November 28, 1995. He wrote the following regarding the hitching chain; "I remember the hitch rake to tie up horses & buggies was located in front of the, now storage bldg., and the elevator, it is now the property of the Hancock County Historical Society. The last person to use it to my knowledge was Filander Scott, who lived back a lane just west of Dale Kuhn (300S). The house was located on a farm now owned by the Forest Sparks family.

I am sure many people have noticed the hitching chain and have wondered what it is and where it is from." Thanks, Greg. Greg is the resident historian for Mohawk, and he knows much about the community. In fact I know designate him the Honorary Mayor of Mohawk.

More on Mohawk. Do you remember the party line on your telephone? Even had certain number of rings if the call was for you but you also could pick up the phone and listen to other persons conversations. I remember it. Telephone service has come a long way. Olive Deshong Duncan operated the telephone exchange in Mohawk in 1929. She was 18 years old. In 1934 Olive married Ralph Duncan and they resided at the telephone exchange. She was paid \$40 a month. On February 7, 1942, Grace Brinker started working and living in the exchange. Grace's daughter started, Ella Marie, helped at the switch board. The Mohawk exchange eventually became part of the Hancock County Rural Telephone, Ninestar today. Telephone service has sure come along way.

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2024-12-18

Aeroplane

By Joe Skvarenina

In the summer of 1917, it was reported that Greenfield would be on the aeroplane route between Columbus, Dayton Ohio and Indianapolis. In July of that year the government leased fields from framers along the National Road for landing strips. Near each landing field numbers were painted on barn roofs displaying a number and arrow for directions. On October 11, 1917, the first plane flew over Greenfield. It attracted a great deal of attention. One publication says they came singly, in groups of three and in battle formations. They soon became a common sight in the community. Lights were placed on the Masonic Temple to guide the planes at night. At times an aeroplane would make a landing near Greenfield and a caravan of cars would go to the site. Some of the pilots would do some stunt flying to please the crowd banking their areophane's over and over again.

A Hancock County aviation pioneer was Weir Cook from Wilkinson. Weir Cook was already in France where he had joined the French army and was serving as an ambulance driver. In April of 1917, America finally entered the war. Cook had already served six months in the French army when he received a release to enter the U.S. Air Service. He quickly achieved the rank of lieutenant with the 94th Aero Squadron, Eddie Rickenbacker's "Hat in the Ring" squadron. Cook wrote home in a letter: "I have the opportunity to help the people who have shouldered such a loathsome burden and have never flinched . . . But it is a terrible, an awful price, which France has paid. At Verdun, a million men were lost and it was all because a crown prince, a murderer and a future monarch said he would take Verdun."

Cook shot down 7 enemy aircraft to become an Ace. Four of those "kills" were observation balloons. Three of them were planes. This earned Cook the title of "balloon buster." (not all were "planes" as stated in your article). Balloons were exceedingly hard to take down - - and balloon busting was a special skill. He became Indiana's first Ace.

Cook received the Distinguished Flying Cross not once but twice. The first time it was with Oak Leaf clusters.

I am not sure he was awarded the Croix de Guerre. Early accounts of his achievements do not mention it. And most websites about him do not mention it. He is also not on the list of Croix de Guerre recipients on the web.

Cook was honorably discharged in 1919 but served as an Army Air Corp Airmail pilot and then the Air Officer for the Indiana Air National Guard through 1928. He resigned his commission at that point.

He was involved in the development of the dive-bombing site for airplanes.

In 1941, when war broke out again - - Cook had to petition Army Air Corp General Hap Arnold to be reinstated (he was not recalled). This was because he was considered too old for service. He stated:

“My presence at the front would be an inspiration and morale builder for young Americans.”

He was not transferred to the US Air Force. The US Air Force did not exist until 1947.

Cook was the Commander of the 361st American Air Base stationed on New Caledonia in the South Pacific (US Army Air Corp).

Weir Cook's friend and fellow aviator, Colonel Roscoe Turner, summed up Cook's life best: "Col. Cook met his death as he would have wished to have met it — in the cockpit of a fighter plane serving his country in World War II. The record of Col. Cook's service to God and country is one of unselfish devotion. He served tirelessly, faithfully, and with no expectation of reward. He was of the eagle's brood. He helped America develop her wings. Behind roaring motors, up where the clouds float, he blazed a trail of America's conquest of the skyway. He was of the type of American whom we all idolize — a fighter, a pioneer, a leader."

Enough. I have told you everything that I know and some things I don't. Talk to me at jksvarenina@Hotmai.com, the Daily Reporter or on Facebook at Joe's Hancock Historic Corner.

2024-12-11

Teddy C. Brewer

By Joe Skvarenina

If you go to the Park Cemetery in the old part in the back, you will see a grave marker which is a statue of a WW I Dough Boy. That is the grave of Teddy C. Brewer, Theodore Clinton Brewer more properly. He was born in Greenfield on September 17, 1897. He was the son of Hiram and Etta Brewer. He was educated in Greenfield elementary and high schools. He cared papers for the Daily Reporter. About the first of February 1915 he left home and enlisted in the regular army on February 8, 1915, at Columbus Ohio. He was attached to Company K, twenty-eight infantry and was sent to the First Division in France. He was on the front lines in the trenches during the German offensive in the summer of 1918. On May 16, 1918, he was badly wounded and subsequently died on May 17.

He was the first boy from Hancock County to die in the line of battle. His body was returned from France and reinterred in Park Cemetery.

Charity Munro writes" I was wondering if you might know about our county's WWI Women's Committee Council of Defense registration cards. I just learned about them over the weekend and am very interested in seeing if Hancock County still had theirs. (I understand that a vast majority of counties disposed of them). They would have been stored at the courthouse, likely in a specially made cabinet." Who can answer Charity's question? In the spring of 1918, it was decided to have the different lines of women's activities recorded in support of the war and who was willing to do those activities. On April 6, 1918, a meeting was called in the Superintendent Office in Greenfield to begin the process. The registration was to begun April 19, 1916, and lasted for ten days. It was organized on township level. The following was the results of the registration: 5285 were recorded, 2 refused and 16 were not at home. It was reported that the tabulation was lost going from office to office. But it was claimed to accurately show what women were willing to do for the war effort. So, who has the cards now?

Enough. I have told you everything that I know and some things I don't. Talk to me at jskvarenina@hotmail.com, the Daily Reporter or on Facebook at Joe's Historic Corner.

2024-12-04

The War to End All Wars

By Joe Skvarenina

Today one cannot help recognizing the many valiant nurses that served our community at home and aboard. One was Nellie Baldwin who volunteered for service in WW I as a Red Cross nurse on the front lines of Europe later to return to Greenfield to teach Latin. Linda Comestock Teal brings to our attention Rebecca Katherine Caraway, another WWI nurse from Sugar Creek Township who was born in 1870. Her father was a schoolteacher, and they lived on a farm in the Philadelphia area. MS Caraway was a member of the Army Nurse Corp. Before she joined the Nurse Corp she worked for the Boston Floating Hospital. She died in 1964 at the age of 93 probably one of the older veterans from those days. She received a full military funeral. Linda says they called her Aunt Kate. Several Hancock citizens worked overseas for the YMCA. These individuals included Dr. B.S. Binford, Marshall Winslow, E.E. Davis, and Ralph Schermerhorn of Greenfield and Donald Peacock of Charlottesville. YWCA workers included Nellie Baldin and Mary Sample. There were others who served with the Friends Committee overseas including Charles Prescott Burner and Tom Black I believe were both ambulance drivers.

President Woodrow Wilson declared war on April 6, 1917. It was obvious that the Germans had a disregard for the rights of neutrals especially through the contracted period of submarine warfare. The people of Hancock County knew that war was inevitable. In an April 5 editorial in the Hancock County Democrat John Mitchell tells, "the age of cruel despotism and hardhearted oppression is passed away with leaders such as Woodrow Wilson..." According to Mitchell, "Flags were displayed everywhere."

One patriot John Sedden of Greenfield, who had been honorable discharged after some thirty years of service in the US Army, in which he served in all parts of the world, entered the service again as a recruiting officer at Peoria and later Decatur Illinois. On April 5 a large consignment of flags was sold out of all stores in Greenfield.

The following Hancock men lost their lives in WWI: Teddy C. Brewer, William Walter Vandine, James D. Braggs, George W. Hite, Claude Matthews Parish, Ben H. Davis, Orla Russell Simmons, Earl Grigsby, Evans Reynold Sexson, Clark Richard Hill, John M. Jessup, William Leo Miller, Orville Howard Cook, John Francis McMahan, Raymond L. Wagoner, James Monroe Jack, and Gladstone Bertram Newhouse.

Enough. I have told you everything that i know and some things I don't. Talk to me at jskvarenina@hotmail.com or write the Daily Reporter also Joe's Historic Corner on Facebook

2024-11-27

Longfellow school/Bradbury gas station

By Joe Skvarenina

Chris McQueeney writes, My husband Kevin and I just purchased the property that once was the Longfellow school and Bradbury gas station at 520 E Main St. We were interested in learning the history of this location and wondered if you could assist. We had heard that you wrote an article about it? Any information you can give us would be appreciated.

The Longfellow School Building, 520 East main Street was at the site. The school was built in 1883 at a cost of \$5400. It was torn down in 1925. Until recently a portion of the wall around the lot remained. There are now apartments at the site. The teachers in 1915 and 1916 were Anna Jackson, Elizabeth Hanes, Kate Martin and Iduna Barrett.

Brad's Phillips 66 Service Station was at the corner of East Main and Pratt Street (currently Rick's Auto Body...the last I knew). The Phillips 66 Station was run by Harold Bradbury (father of our past Sherriff, Jim). The lot in back of the station was an empty weed lot. Neighborhood kids would mow the weeds in the summer to make a baseball diamond and play baseball. The lot is bounded by East Main, Pratt, and North St. and an ally along the West side.

In 1905 Greenfield had five schools. High School was held for a brief period at the Old West Building. Lincoln had four teachers and Washington had six. The high school had 17 instructors. East Greenfield was a one room schoolhouse.

The Old Lincoln School was located on the corner of Pennsylvania and Pierson Streets. it was opened in 1890 at a cost of \$5,946 and was closed in 1934. Later when the Boys Club was formed, it was used as a clubhouse. It was remodeled and reopened as a school in 1948. It was closed again May 29, 1969. Today there are apartments at the site and I have been told that some of the bricks were used in the construction of the apartments.

Enough. I have told you everything that I know and some things I don't. Talk to me at jskvarenina@hotmail.com, the Daily Reporter, or on Facebook at Joe's Historic Corner.

2024-11-20

Old Pete

By Joe Skvarenina

This story is from Morristown. In the 1800's a doctor in Morristown knew of a demise of a man in the community. According to some the man was a tramp. No one in the community knew anything about the tramp. After the man passed away the doctor took the body into the woods and all the supplies he needed and when he exited the woods, he had a skeleton. The doctor subsequently strung the bones together in the correct order and kept the skeleton at his office. About 1900 the skeleton was given to the high school. to be used in teaching anatomy." Old Pete " was skeleton residence in the science room and was used to teach students the proper location and names of bones. All students prior to the 1960's knew "Old Pete". No one remembers when he disappeared or what happened. The last time he was seen was at Halloween when he was placed at the top of the flagpole at the school. I don't know if the story is true. I heard at Morristown July 27 at the Prisoner of War marker dedication.

Have you ever heard of Cry Baby Bridge? Steve Elsbury says it is located on 675 North near the Hayes Cemetery North of 234. It is a metal span and Steve says that some believe that is is haunted. At night around midnight if you listen carefully you can hear a baby cry. Some say it was a child killed in an auto accident or a runaway slave child drowned to prevent discovery by the slave catchers.

Enough. I have told you everything that I know and some things I don't. Talk to me at jskvareman@hotmail.com, the Daily Reporter, or on Facebook at Joe's Hancock Historic Corner.

2024-11-13

Tyner Store

By Joe Skvarenina

One reader writes, "I Read your article in today's Greenfield paper, and am pleased to see that plans are in the works to get the county history better 'marked'. As you and I know, the marker for Tyner Store just west of the Shiloh Church on 500 S is gone, the remainder just hanging by a chad.

And you indicated that the remnants of his store remain on Morristown Pike. I don't know if the current property owners want visitors poking around their property, but I've figured out it was on 500 E as Morristown Pike doesn't go further south, at least not by that name. It appears to be on the south edge of the property of the first house south of 550 S. See pictures below.

Carl & Flossie Purcell, a delightful couple, used to live there, both now deceased. We knew them well and I'm surprised Carl never mentioned the store remnants...surely, he knew." Yes, Tyner's Store is still there

Elijah Tyner built a store in Blue River Township in 1833. It became the best-known store in the early history of the county. In addition to Hancock, people would come from Rush and Shelby Counties to do their trading at the site. I believe that the location was on Morristown Pike and the buildings are still there. Tyner operated his store until 1872. Mr. Tyner migrated from South Carolina to Hancock County in 1820 and settled in our area before the county was organized in 1828. He had also lived in Kentucky and Franklin and Decatur Counties Indiana. In 1821 he entered eighty acres in Blue River Township, He was the third white man to make a land entry in the county. In 1822 Tyner married Mary Nelson who died in 1830. In 1832 he married Ann Hollerston, his third wife. Mr. Tyner was of pioneer stock, and he arrived in the county within two years of the first settler. People say as a merchant he was honest and accommodating. In addition to being a merchant he was a farmer and stock trader. In 1822 he planted an orchard and was very interested in horticulture. He helped many of his pioneer neighbors to get their produce to market. He was a Baptist, Whig, and Republican in the that order. He had a large family and three wives. He is buried in the Shiloh Church Cemetery. The first land entry in the county was made by Harmon Warrum. Tom Van Duyn and Michael Kester are in the process of replacing the marker which was probably knocked down by farm equipment.

Enough. I have told you everything that I know and some things I don't. Talk to me. Write to jskvarenina@hotmail.com, the Daily Reporter or on Facebook at Joes' Hancock Historic Corner.

2024-11-06

Adelphian Band

By Joe Skvarenina

If you want to study local history, it pays to look at old newspapers. Greg Murphy calls our attention to these two stories.

The death of Isaac Davis left only two members left of the Adelphian Band which was organized in Greenfield in 1883. James Whitcomb Riley was a snare drummer and his two brothers, John and Hiram, also played with the group. In fact, it was known as the Riley Brothers Band but was incorporated as the Adelphian Band. For ten years the Band played at fairs and political meetings across eastern Indiana. The band was well equipped with elaborate band uniforms and a colorful wagon. This wagon had two high driver's seats, and these places were occupied by drummers Riley and Quinn Johnson. Four plumed horses pulled the wagon. The band members consisted of the Davis Brothers, Ed Millikin, Thomas Carr, John Guymon, Fred Hafner, Emsley Wilson Johnson, and the three Riley brothers. Riley was 19 years old when he joined the group, but he was more interested in poetry than music. Davis taught Riley and other Greenfield youth how to play instruments. In fact, he taught Riley how to play the drums. In 1871 Isaac David directed the Citizens Band with brother Abijah. Son Tod Davis played the clarinet and grandson Carl Davis also played it. Charlie Davis nephew was an orchestra leader at the Indian Theater. Isaac Davis was a musical leader of the Greenfield Community.

Another story but sadder. Miss Emma Brier made her home in the barn of Mrs. Charles Brier in Sugar Creek township. Young Miss Brier seemed to suffer from the effects of giving birth and after some investigation a baby boy was found dead by strangulation in the hay mow. After close examination by Dr. Payne of Julietta, Squire Barnett was contacted for further investigation. Julietta was a small community at one time next to the Marion County Home. Miss Brier confessed to killing her baby. A calico string was around the child's neck which came from the girls' apron. There would be a coroner inquest and the murder was probably the result of a panicked unwed mother.

Enough. I have told you everything that I know and some things I don't. Talk to me at jskvarenina@hotmail.com, the Daily Reporter or on Facebook at Joe's Hancock Historic Corner.

2024-10-30

Knightstown Shelbyville Railroad

By Joe Skvarenina

Don Nigh shares with us a small booklet called Memories of Florence Johnson Rock. Ms. Rock was born in the 1850's. I found a lot of information in this small booklet about the Knightstown Shelbyville Railroad which I have never seen before. The Hancock County stop was in Petersburg. The train was an old-time steam traction engine. The first excursion was to Shelbyville. Passengers were accommodated by placing seats on flatcars. At times the passengers were required to push the train upgrades and remove livestock for the tracks. Wood piles were left at intervals to supply fuel for the engine. The train consisted of two box cars, one flat car and the engine. One of the box cars was used for luggage. The average speed was 10 -15 miles per hour. In 1848 the State Legislature authorized its construction with \$200,000 worth of capital. Stock sold for \$50 a share. Original incorporators were R.J. Hubbard, William McKee, John Addison, Henry B Hall from Rush County. John Wolf, John Hasell from Hancock County.

Legend has it a lady was angry at the train for killing her pig so at the foot of the hill she greased the tracks stopping the train from making the grade. Stations for the Knightstown Shelbyville Railroad were maintained at Knightstown, Carthage (Probable Petersburg) Morristown, Shelbyville and Hanover. The total route was 25 miles in length. Henry G. Cory was the builder of the Hanover warehouse and station at his own expense. Henry B. Hill of Cartage was President, and his son was the conductor. William Potter was also a conductor. Morristown station was located at the site of the old Methodist Parsonage. The alley west of the Kopper Kettle was the location of the train tracks. The Kopper Kettle was a grain storage elevator. On July 7, 1858, a meeting was held at Morristown to decide if to repair the old train bed. This committee consisted of William P. Hull, G. Huddleston, William Glass of Knightstown, Thomas G Hill, David Marshall of Carthage, and A.C. Hardy and Henry C. Wolf of Morristown and Alexander Cory, James Lindsay of Shelbyville. New rails were placed, and the train operated for a time, but the Knightstown Shelbyville Road went out of business in 1863. It was sold for scrap during the Civil War.

Enough. I have told you everything that I know and some things I don't. Talk to me at jskvarenina@hotmail.com, the Daily Reporter, or on Facebook at Joe's Hancock Historic Corner.

2024-10-23

Practice Bombs

By Joe Skvarenina

Gene Addison writes, " Just a note regarding Weir Cook----I was a sophomore in 1943 in Wilkinson High School, in the afternoon a a very powerful plane buzzed the High school, it make a noise like we never heard, everyone ran to the windows to see what it was, it was Weir Cook in a P-38 fighter, He buzzed the school two more times. I don't believe anyone one in Wilkinson had ever seen this plane before. It was thrilling to say the least. It highlighted the fact that we were at war." WW II involved the entire community. Many war industries in the surrounding area produced materials extremely important to the war. The tomato packing plants Greenfield's Frazier Packing and Shirley's Foods produced food stuffs. Crops were picked in Hancock county by German prisoners of war held at Morristown and Camp Atterbury. I have been told that Italian prisoners of war picked tomatoes at the site of the old Kmart. Small factories around the county like Fountaintown Forge produced parts for Jeeps, tanks, and even concrete practice bombs were produced by the Boyer Plant in Greenfield. In fact, those bombs line the drive at the Greenfield Cemetery at certain locations still today. Rationing during WW II soon placed limits on most things needed in daily life and at first it seemed reasonable. But as time went on it became more and more unbearable. On the last page of the 1944 Greenfield High School Yearbook carried this note, "We can't buy sugar, we can't buy shoes-and are tires are flat -we got the blues." I guess this sum it up the best. The Ration Board had begun operations in 1942. Tires were one of the first things rationed. A flat on the family vehicle could quickly become a major calamity. The first Hancock Rationing Board met on January 5, 1942, and included Dr. C.M. Gibbs, Lattie Hanes, John Souder, and Sam Hughes. The Boys Club collected 7,460 pounds of magazines and 7.650 pounds of paper in a scrap drive. The school children also collected milkweed pods for life preserves and in one drive collected 2,500 bags.

Enough. I have told you everything that I know and some things I don't. Talk to me at jskvarenina@hotmail.com that Daily Reporter or on Facebook at Joe's Historic Corner.

2024-10-16

Blue River Packing Company

By Joe Skvarenina

Don Nigh shares with me Don Wortman's book, "Hoosier Boy's Journey." I am fascinated by the description of tomato farming in this area during the 1940's. As you probably know German and Italian prisoners of war were utilized in the planting and harvesting of the tomato crop. Because of the WW II shortage of labor teens and younger were also put to work in the fields.

The first to be done was the sorting of the plants. These plants were grown in Georgia and shipped to Indiana in time for spring planting. Sorting the plants meant that the roots had to be separated from each other so that the tomato setter could grab a single plant for setting quickly as the planter was pulled through the field. Older boys and girls were allowed the tomato plants into the ground. The setters sat under large barrels of water piled high tomato plants. Two setters in each row sat in metal seats next to each other. One planter set with the right hand and the other with the left hand. They were pulled through the field by an old red Farm All Tractor. The rows in which the tomatoes were to be planted were made by a unique plow, a triangular mad steel piece. Mechanical tubes sent bursts of water from the barrels into the farrows as the setter placed the plants. Many fingers were mashed in the process. The day started in the field at 6:30 AM. The pay was 40 cents per hour, and you worked until sundown. Young workers were picked by truck or they road their bikes down dusty roads hand to the tomato fields. In the picking the tomato crop you made up to ten cents per hamper. I full hamper weighed about 35 lbs. I have been told that Italian prisoners of war picked tomatoes at the site of the old Kmart in Greenfield.

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2024-10-09

Old Cabins

By Joe Skvarenina

The pioneer cabin on the fairground property was located at one time in the Fortville area on a farm along County Road 950 North. A barn was built around it. The cabin was constructed sometime in the 1800's. There are probably more log cabins in the county than one could imagine. Many times, structures were built around the log cabins. I know the farmhouse I was raised in was that way. Also look at the cabin at the Shambles in Cumberland that was at one time surrounded by a house. Ron Sanders writes "The Log structure is believed to be an early provision stop for stagecoaches and their passengers. In 1831 the property was owned by Jane Eastes, her husband and Uncle William Harvey. Jane's brother John Eastes was mentioned in Hancock County history as operating a grocery store in Western Sugar Creek Township on the National Road. Although that tidbit of information isn't precise stating that this is that structure, I have taken it to be so. John is also listed as a prominent early settler of the county and the first Trustee of Buck Creek Township, which is situated North of Sugar Creek Township. Jane, her husband and Uncle William traveled from the Carolinas to Indiana. William and Jane probably lived somewhere nearby in a structure that is long since been destroyed. One of her son's cared for her until her death well into her early 90's. Her son's siblings expressed their jealousy of the Military service pension that Jane's son received as William was a veteran of the war of 1812. He was a swordsmith by trade and a surviving member of the Battle of New Orleans. William is buried near Bloomfield Indiana (Franklin County) in the Simm's Cemetery. While Jane's obituary states that she died near Cumberland and is buried in the Eastes family area of the Sparks Cemetery near Mt. Comfort Rd. and Interstate 70.

Any early documentation or photos of the cabin do not exist. Below is the earliest photo I have showing the structure after wood clapboard siding was applied. I believe this to be in the early 1900's. This is the Meyer family. Henry Meyer is the individual that did the major construction to the structure. While demolishing the home, several studs had the date of 1928 written on them, leading me to an assumed date that the crude home was modernized 1928. In later years when US 40 was widened, Herman was paid by the Indiana State Highway Department to detach the North section of the home and swing it to the west side of the home, as stated by the Comb's family. In 1987 Gertrude Meier Combs sold the one acre lot along with their home and a detached building to Alva Sanders & his son Ron. For several years it was utilized for several different purposes. But it ended its final days as a rental property.

In 2001 the home suffered a fire that took most of the top floor. The structure suffered from outdated wiring, too many space heaters and a rat that liked to chew on the fabric wrapped wiring. At that time, thru prayer, I felt that God had a plan for me to preserve the historic structure. With the help of several family members a roof was added, the foundation was repaired, chinking was completed, three doors and windows were hand fabricated in our restoration shop, The Shambles Restorations.

Numerous artifacts have been unearthed in the surrounding grounds, dirt floor of the basement and within its structure. Coins were found at the front doorstep. An amber beer bottle from the Terre Haute Brewing Company was unearthed. Research discovered that this Brewery closed in the 1960's. Several "Bitter bottles" one of them labeled Jewel Tea Co. Chicago Illinois. These bottles were discovered hidden in various nooks and crannies in the attic and basement. In the late 17th century Bitter medicine bottles contained among other things, Opium. Workers digging the basement would sneak a swig for relief from their aches and pains then hide the empty bottle for me to find a hundred or so years later. China shards and even a 1940 Indiana license plate that was used to patch the roof. Possibly the most precious find was a blank postcard dated 1925 and pre addressed to New Palestine High School. It was the method used by the parents of a sick child to report their child's absence from school. This item has been donated to the Hancock Historical Society.

At the rear wall of the cabin under the foundation, a cistern can be accessed from the basement or from the outside. A cistern was used to collect either rainwater or gray water. When I cleaned this cistern out, I discovered numerous old whiskey and beer bottles, Widemann and Blatz. Some of us may remember the commercial slogan "Hey Mabel, Black Label". The story told to me was that Uncle Otto Meier or Uncle Ott who lived in the rear building was forbidden to consume any alcohol on the property by his niece Gertrude Meier Combs, the owner of the property. He would throw his empties down the cistern and not the trash, hiding them and in doing so he could avoid his niece's wrath.

There is a story passed through the Meier family that says Henry Ward Beecher once stayed there. Henry was a preacher in Indianapolis at the Second Presbyterian church and later in Brooklyn, New York. He was an outspoken abolitionist and a brother to Harriet Beecher Stowe, author of the famous Story, "Uncle Tom's Cabin." Beecher was a colorful orator and historical figure. Henry traveled the National Road and Cumberland area on his way to his family home of Cincinnati, Ohio. John Brown the radical abolitionist upon receiving a shipment of Springfield rifles. Coined them as 'Beecher Bibles' a reference to Henry's fiery sermons against slavery." Ron has passed away but will be long remembered.

Enough. I have told you everything that I know and some things I don't. Talk to me at jskvarenina@hotmail.com, the Daily Reporter or on Facebook at Joe's Hancock Historic Corner.

2024-10-02

Boxing

By Joe Skvarenina

Linda Dunn writes, "I was tracing the history of a black family in Shelbyville when a newspaper search for Bert Montgomery (one of the descendants) took me to this article. Albert was apparently an amateur fighter (and unfortunately not a very good one) and went with some others to Fortville, Indiana for a public event that went very badly very fast.

I hadn't paid much attention to this aspect of history. Which leads me to wonder a little about early sporting events in Hancock County."

The article tells that probably around the 1880's Barney Furry was a boxer who made his headquarters in Fortville. A boxing exposition was to be held with the Anderson Athletic Club. Along with Furry local boxers Kidd Miller, Fred Lawrence, Pleas Redd and Bert Morgan were also participated in the match. African American Miller was to fight William Torrence when the fight began a brother of Torrence climbed through the ropes with a gun in his hand and declared he was there to be sure that his brother would not get whipped. At first, Furry thought it was a joke, and it amused Furry. The fight was called a draw. But a mob began to form and didn't like the outcome of the match. Eventually with cunning Furry and others got out of town alive but with some cases with bruises on the other boxers. It was some match.

Jim Bradbury tells us about the restaurant across the street from the old bus station which was called the Courtesy House. The building is still there as a residence today. Do you remember Bob's Store in Mohawk which was at the location of the current Ninestar building in Mohawk.

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2024-09-25

Gatling Gun and Freeport

By Joe Skvarenina

Freeport was founded by Judge Bailey in 1836 and consisted of 31 lots. Later the Riverside addition recorded in 1923 had 12 lots. Fortune Lewis Bailey was a Freeport inventor of the Gatling gun. Other inventions by the Bailey included the plow clod tender, coffee roaster, cash registers and other items. Bailey doesn't not get credit for the Gatling Gun because when he went to the Civil War Richard Gatling took the plans made improvements and patented it under the name Gatling Gun. The first grist mill and sawmill built on the Blue River was there. Also, a woolen mill run by the Baileys was in Freeport.

In the 1890's people from Greenfield would cycle to Freeport to enjoy the old mill besides the Brandywine Creek. There is nothing much left of the old mill today, maybe a foundation. But it was this spot that inspired the Barbershop ballad, "Down by the Old Mill Stream." The history about local Greenfield composer and musician Earl K. Smith is surrounded by legend. It is difficult to separate fact from fiction regarding this gentleman. The Smith home was located at the site of the old Shelby's Gas station. According to local historian Dorothy June Williams, "Earl K. Smith was a lively young man, considered tall, as he stood 5 feet 10. Worn like some of the others his brown hair was parted in the middle, it's waves brushed down the sides." Smith over the years, tickled the ivories in many a nickelodeon in Greenfield and other parts, At Freeport a fall rippled over the Brandywine, in 1908 this was a very popular place to go for a summer outing. It was at this location according to legend that Earl Smith and Charles Gant began composing and writing "Down by the Old Mill Stream." It was later that Earl Smith went to work for a music publisher in Chicago named Tell Taylor. Taylor sent a check for \$25 to Charlie Gant in payment for the words. He paid Smith \$500 for the composition. Neither Gant nor Smith's name appeared on the Sheet music. Over the years Earl Smith performed in local theaters and the Hancock County Fair. Smith also has written and, and composed "O'er The Billowy Sea", Where the Dear Old Rockies Tiptoe to the Sea", The Boogie Man Will Get You If You Don't Watch Out", "Son Of A Buckskin" and "It's A Long Way To Dixie". His compositions were featured by the Ted Weems Orchestra on Radio Programs and sing over the NBC national hook up by Ethel Shietta.

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2024-09-18

POW

By Joe Skvarenina

On July 27 I had the opportunity to attend the marker dedication in Morristown commemorating the POW Camp which was located in that community. This marker was done through the efforts of Bob Wortman, Indiana Historical Bureau and various veteran groups. According to the Historical Bureau, Camp Atterbury became a WW II internment camp in 1943 for Italian and later German POW's. In order meet an increasing agricultural needs farms and canneries had to develop alternative labor forces for food production. Subsequently, Morristown Cannery owner Paul Wolf established a branch POW Camp in Morristown. The location of the marker is near the Ashbury Cemetery. Approximately 250 German POWs were housed in tents at the Morristown branch for the 1944-1945 harvests. These. POWs worked alongside locals in nearby field and canneries under army guard. People in Shelby County treated the POWs fairly under the Geneva Convention hoping the American POWs would be treated the same way.

Barb White writes from Carthage writes "I just read your column in the Reporter, and I remember that time very well. My family lived in southwestern Rush County and my father planted a tomato patch for one of the Morristown Canneries. We had both German and Italian prisoners come to pick. Because of the tomato patch my little sisters and I would watch the fruit being harvested. Daddy said the Germans were dour and quiet, but the Italians seemed happy to be there. One day One the Italians brought my mother a special hamper of beautiful tomatoes and said they were 'for the' bambino'

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2024-09-11

Sutherland's Grocery

By Joe Skvarenina

Retta Livengood tells us, my Grandfather, Donald Ashley Sutherland operated Sutherland & Son Grocery in New Palestine with his Son William Talbert Sutherland. The store was on the corner of Bitner & US 52 in New Palestine. The store operated it until 1971.

According to the New Palestine History, "about the time of the Civil war , a frame building business room was erected at the northeast corner at Bitner and Main...In the year 1886 through the year 1910, Salathiel Sutherland started a general store in New Bethel(Wanamaker). In 1912 Salathiel and his two sons William and Donald started another store in Morristown called Sutherland and Sons. In 1920 Donald Sutherland came to New Palestine and bought a store from Mr. Geisel...which was the Main and Bitner building. He called this one Sutherland Brothers. At this point the brothers had two stores , Morristown and New Palestine...Donald ran both stores after the death of his brother in 1930. ... he sold the New Palestine store to Ray Cole in 1942. Donald continued to run the Morristown store until 1946...Mr. John Schier purchased the Morristown Grocery in 1948. At this point Donald and son William T. Sutherland repurchased the New Palestine store in 1949. Son William T. Sutherland then operated the store."

The following people worked in the New Palestine store Fritz Rupky, Henry Wagner, Indiana Hanes, Harry Pugh, Henry Kirkoff, Lloyd Wilkins, Lee Wickliff, Lisa Moon, Henry Huber, Clara Armiger, Margaret Lantz, Dale Parish, Fritz Rosenbaum, Skin Wickliff, Irene Gundrum, Bill Coyle, Bill Draper, Helen Combs, Kevin Rusehhaupt, Evelyn Sanders, Robert Gunn, Marie Kennedy, Riat Faut, Ometia Bowlen, Belle Johnson, Lucille Trees, Marilyn Butler, Linda King, Shirley Tom, Velma Mattingly, Mrs. William Sutherland and daughters Teresa, Linda, Debra and Karla.

Donald Sutherland passed away in 1977. He operated Sutherland's Grocery for 54 years before retiring in 1967. During his lifetime he served as President of the Union State Bank in Morristown and belonged Masonic Lodge 404 in New Palestine. Thanks, Retta, for sharing.

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2024-09-04

Masonic Building

By Joe Skvarenina

Mark Galbraith writes, "I am attempting to locate the name of the architect that designed the Masonic building. at the corner of State and Main in Greenfield. I have a college classmate Dr. Ronald Fritze who's a historian and author. Ron got detoured through Greenfield while driving and saw the building and asked me to locate the name. Apparently, there is a very close resemblance to the one in Ft. Wayne. Ron has several books listed on Amazon."

In answer to your question, Catherine Roberts, writes "I am researching the building located at 2 W. Main Street, the Creative Arts and Events Center, for a project in my Local History and Genealogy class in pursuit of my Masters of Library and Information Science. I was wondering if you had any information regarding the building's construction or any information on its uses over the years. I've been consulting Richman's text, as well as some of your works for information regarding the building, but I wanted to ask you directly if you had any additional information you could provide about the structure. I am aware of the uses of the Masonic Hall, and I've found some information regarding the J. Ward Walker Company, but I was hoping you might know or be able to provide information regarding the architect of the building. I have looked through the Interim Report, but it did not list an architect, nor does the entry for the building's inclusion in the historic district listed in the National Register. " After some exhaustive research in the Hancock County Democrat Ms. Roberts discovered that the architect was Louis Gibson.

The Creative Arts Building is the second Masonic Lodge in Greenfield. I believe that the architecture is Romanesque Revival and was built in in1895. The first Masonic Building was at current the location of Joyner Homes. Prior to 1854 the lodge had no building and met in the Old Seminary Building on Pennsylvania Street. In 1854 the group gained in size an could afford its own structure. The building was a three story brick building at the Joyner site. The corner stone was laid by Deputy Grand Master Elijah Newlin on August 15, 1854.Hancock County Lodge 101 now has a third site.

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2024-08-28

Hancock's Hospital

By Joe Skvarenina

Lifelong resident of Hancock County teacher, and Historian Larry Fox tells, “The proposed land for the hospital location was donated by Fannie Andis. This was done way before the construction began. The land was an old plot on the northeast edge of Greenfield and was referred to as Boyd Grove. In the past meetings were held at the site as well as family gatherings. There were many old growth trees on the plot. For years before the hospital was built the site was the location of the Hancock County Fairgrounds. Events at the Fair included livestock, horse races and home goods. The Fair even had an opens air grandstand for spectators. The shows on the track were as much attraction as people barking their wares. The hospital was to span the north south and would face highway nine on the west. In time it would be a beautiful location with old growth trees with an impressive public building completing the site.

Larry Fox goes on to say,” My grandfather asked me to go to the corner stone laying at the new hospital grounds. It was May 10,1950 and I was fourteen years old. We rushed off to the event when we reached the north side of Greenfield and there were a lot of cars headed to the event. We made it through the traffic and found a good place to park. There was a large crowd on the grounds. My grandfather, Robert D. Vandebark, and I made it through the people to the raised platform where the stone was being prepared for the ceremony to be performed by the Masonic Lodge according to their order. This was a time people long hoped for, our own hospital. No more trips to Indianapolis, Anderson, Shelbyville or other cities for health care or birthing babies. Doctor Robert Kinnaman was the major proponent of the project. As the Masons hit the corner of the stone, the future of Hancock County seemed more secure. At later time when the structure was completed and opened in a showing no one would be able to forget in my mind the and the years fought to bring a local hospital home was worth the years that made it possible.”

Hancock Memorial Hospital was dedicated December 2, 1951, with a celebratory day and an enthusiastic community response which brought 4200 people to the new hospital campus. Dr. Ted Gabrielson describes the original hospital patients' room as 10x16 with no bathroom attached. Each room had two beds and two patients, which was a minimum standard at the time of construction. He goes on to tell that there were” limited visiting hours, and the patients stayed much longer, and there was one room for the ER, X-Ray and surgery. If there was overcrowding patients stayed in the hallways. Physical Therapy in the late 1970’s or early 1980’s began in the basement of the hospital in a single room with one therapist.

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2024-08-21

Roads

By Joe Skvarenina

I visited with Carl Crock the other day and he shared with me his find of an Indiana Road Map from the Midwest Map Company, entitled " Highway Guide of Indiana for Service". There is no date on the map, but it looks like the mid 1920's or early 1930's. The map designates the road as gravel, dirt or paved. On the map it identifies the service provided by the stations along the roads and a telephone number. For example, Wolcott 7. No stations are listed for Hancock County. The only county cities on the map are Greenfield, Fortville, McCordsville and New Palestine. The only interstates on the map are Routes 40 67, 38, and 52. Some of the services listed a year include tourist camps, private ladies rest rooms, vulcanize, candies and cigars, gas and oil, and will transport you to your tourist camp. I did some further research on the Midwest Map company at the Indiana State Archives and found out the Mid-West Map Company (c. 1925 - 1935) was an Aurora, Missouri-based company that issued early highway maps to travelers for free, covering their costs and earning a profit through sponsorship and advertisements for gas stations, motels, and other businesses along highway routes. Little is known about the company's history and its maps were undated, making an exact date range of its existence difficult to establish, but the company's efforts resulted in the first comprehensive set of highway maps for the entire country. Its model of providing free highway maps to travelers would become a standard practice for decades, especially by competing gas station chains. Can you still get free maps at service stations, today? Michael Veltman for the Indiana State Archive provides us with 1923- 24 Indiana State Highway Commission Maps. These maps tell us about the best insurance for all of us is good roads. In 1922 and 1924 Indiana paved 400 miles of roads a year. Also, the state provided regular systematic maintenance of 4,000 miles every day. In addition, every county seat and city with 5,000 population is on paved road.

There were three roads in Hancock County when it was organized. According to John H. Binford, "the first road was an Indian trail called the Napoleon Trace... Binford said it ran through Blue River, Jackson and Green Townships." Russ Trees had it going through Brown Township in addition. Over the years I have attempted to find the old Trace without any luck until Doc Hardin told me he thought it was 700E. But that is north and south. The Brookville and the Centerville or the old state road were in existence before Hancock County was organized in 1828. Is it possible that the Old Centerville Road is E100S. I know that the Old Centerville Road followed South Street in Greenfield. Now the National Road began in Cumberland Maryland in 1811 with plans of ending it in St. Louis. But Congress didn't fund it after 1838 in Indiana and it became a toll road after the Central Plank Company took it over in 1851 and laid planks and boards over the surface.

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2024-08-14

Greenfield City Police Department

By Joe Skvarenina

The Greenfield Police Department was established in 1850, shortly after the Greenfield was incorporated as a town. After the first elected Marshal failed to meet the required qualifications N.P. Howard was appointed as the town's first Marshal. In 1865 Marshal Henry Newby posted a notice prohibiting obstruction of streets and alleys within the corporate limits. The original log jailhouse was burned to the ground by an inmate in 1882 during the term of Town Marshal William W. Ragan. From the late 1930's to the early 1950's the police department was located in the northwest corner of the Courthouse. A red light at the northeast corner of State and Main was the signal utilized to contact the police department. The police department would call the telephone operator for directions as there were no radios or any other forms of communication. The department moved to a house on West South Street just west of State Route 9 before moving into the City Hall after it was constructed in 1956. It moved to 23 West before the construction of the facility at 116 South state street which was renovated in 1997. After Greenfield became a City, there have been ten police chiefs including Chief Wiggins, Purl Johnson, Perry Easton, Ted Sadler, William Shull, Charles Glidewell, Robert Butler, Darrel David, Rick Hoy, John Jester and Jeff Rasche.(This write up was provided by Pat Elmore and was probably written with material provided by Charlie Glidewell).

Also, if you go east on Davis Road to the FOP there is a peace officer memorial and every Memorial Day a recognition service is held at the site. Peace officers honored on the memorial include Malcom Grass, Danny Garrison, and Will Phillips III. All who died in the line of duty. Thanks to Robin Lowder for the information.

Enough. I have told you everything that I know and some things I don't. Talk to me at skvarenina@hotmail.com, the Daily Reporter or on Facebook at Joe's Hancock Historical Corner.

2024-08-07

Save the Depot

By Joe Skvarenina

The Shirley Historical Society was created in 1990, in conjunction with the Centennial event or Founders Day. Delbert Reason coined the name “Founders.” Darrell Deck was the first president with Delbert Reason, vice-president, Mary Alice Stewart, secretary, Terri Wright Wilson, treasurer. In 1996, Darrell Deck informed the Shirley Town Council that the Society planned to move Dr. Ralph Wilson’s office is one and half blocks north and on the opposite side of the Gas America Tanker on the Octagon Property street. The proposed location would be on the former right away of the Penn Central Railroad, currently owned by Gas America. Brothers and owners, Daniel, and Richard White, had agreed to donate this strip of land between Main Street and the former Railroad Depot to the town so that the former doctor’s office could be relocated in that area. It was donated in honor of their parents Keith White and Barbara White Pasko. The Shirley Town Board gave the Historical Society a 25-year lease on the property. According to the Shirley Historical Society’s Deck, the building started on the Hancock County side and Doc Wilson moved it to the Henry County side. Deck went on to add, “Just before Doc Wilson died in the early 1950’s, he sold his office building to David and Beverly Estell who lived in part of it at first and had a flower shop that supplemented their funeral home.” Mrs. Estell retired and sold the business to a young couple who planned to tear down the flower shop. At that point, it was acquired by the Shirley Historical Society.

According to Deck, Doc Wilson delivered about 4,000 babies during his practice. The office was moved by Anderson House Movers. In 2011, the Shirley Historical Society started a “Save the Depot” effort. According to President Jerry Duke, the hardwood floor in the Depot was sinking because the beams had rotted causing the floor to be dangerous to visitors. Two heavy cast iron stoves and a telegraph machine stood in one area for years and the floor had a significant bend on that side of the building. The Depot, built in 1893, and the nearby historic doctor’s office was closed for repairs and storage temporarily. The cost was estimated between \$12,000 and \$20,000. The Henry County Community Foundation offered a \$6,000 grant. The Hancock County Community Foundation would not contribute unless the owner, the Town of Shirley, became involved. The Shirley Historical Society called for volunteer labor to do the tasks at hand. In 2013, the Depot floor was removed, and a new concrete floor was finished with a vinyl flooring. The cost was \$12,734.43. In 2014, restrooms were installed in the Depot costing \$4,500. On March 18, 2014, the last known wooden caboose in existence came into town. It ran the Cleveland, Cincinnati, Chicago, and St Louis Railway also known as the Big Four. According to Locomotive Engineer Maurice Lewman, it passed through Shirley. It is now parked next to the Shirley Museum and was welcomed to town by 19 members of the Shirley Historical Society. The owner of the caboose was Tom Allison. The caboose, built around 1910, was part of the collection of the Carthage, Knightstown, and Shirley Railroad that operated for 30 years. The Shirley Historical Society bought the caboose for \$5,000 and spent \$10,000 for new tracks

to transport the caboose to the community. Local resident Joan Cupp's father, Herbert Collier, was a foreman on the Big Four. August 2014, a \$5,000 deposit was made on the caboose. The Shirley Historical Society has the original pictures of the caboose going through Shirley in the early 1900's. The group tracked the caboose railroad number and that was the reason for buying that caboose. They paid \$6,500 to have the caboose moved to the site. The Shirley Historical Society built a stone base for the caboose to sit on May 2015. The Society paid \$1,800 in August 2015, to paint the Depot back to its original color. The color was tracked through railroad history and original samples. The current color is the original orange that the Depot was painted. at the time. The depot is open by appointment and on special holidays

Well enough. I have told you everything that I know and some things I don't. Talk to me at jkvarenina@hotmail.com, the Daily Reporter or Facebook at Joes' Historic Corner.

2024-07-31

Hancock County Historical Society

By Joe Skvarenina

On September 26, 2024, the Hancock County Historical Society will be 60 years. Many of the original are now gone. Tom Williams was an active member in the early years recently passed away. Tom and his mother were very active in the Hancock County Historical Society. Both writing books and articles on the local history scene.

The Hancock Historical Society was founded September 26, 1964, at the Presbyterian Church. Those present voted to proceed with a permanent organization. Mrs. Paul Ogg was Temporary Chairman. Two themes of the first meeting was the need for the Historical Society and History can be fun. Committee to select permanent officers included Mrs. Amy Rooney, Miss Bev. Montrose, Tom Williams, Lester Fiqua, and Paul Terrell. In 1963 the lighted display case at the hospital was the first activity. In it was exhibited Civil War items from the collections of CW Tidrow and John Sullivan. In 1966 June Williams started writing a column for the newspaper called Halcyon Hancock where we live the life of Riley. The Society has two museums, the Chapel in the Park and the Log Jail. The Log Jail museum was moved to Riley Park in 1967. This structure was built in 1853 on the south side of the public square according to the specification issued by the county commissioners. This structure was beside the gas company on South Street when moved to Riley Park. The move to Riley Park would have been the second mover for the Log Jail. The interior and exterior are solid logs 12 inches thick. The walls and floors in the second-floor cell room are nailed with square nails about two inches apart. This was cheap security for those who wanted to saw out. The cell doors were of heavy oak also filled with nails. When built the windows were barred. When constructed, it was intended to provide a jail without the use of expensive iron. The Chapel in the Park the former Philadelphia United Methodist Church was built in 1856. It was first moved at the site in 1906. It was moved again to Riley Park in June 1981. Marjorie Hughes Walker was the first President of the Hancock Historical Society. Later the Society had a lighted display case in the Hancock County Court House. In 1965 Bibles were exhibited in the case in the County Courthouse by the Historical Society. The Bibles illustrated different ages and languages in their texts. The Hancock County Historical Society in 1965 estimated that Hancock County had an average of one church every five or six miles.

What do you know about Spring Lake? Located about one half mile southwest of Philadelphia, the Spring Lake Park had been named for a small lake created by a dam in 1885. It was first known as Dyers Grove. In 1912 it was platted and in 1927 it became an incorporated town. The Spring Lake Men's Club met in the old ice house and was incorporated in 1947. This group raised \$16,110 and eventually constructed the community center.

Enough. I have told your everything that I know and some things I don't. Talk to me at jskavarenina@hotmail.com, Daily Reporter or on Facebook at Joes Hancock Historical Corner.

2024-07-24

Col Meet Gary Wright

By Joe Skvarenina

Do you know Gary Wright? Dr. Gary Wright, President of World Renewal in Hancock County shares with us of his family's connection to the Shirley's Faith Community.

"The Gerald Alton and Mabel Harris Wright family of Shirley, Indiana produced nine children: Robert D. Wright (Dorothy Bernice Milner Wright), Mary Lou Wright McDaniel (Don McDaniel), twins Eugene (Barbara Milner Wright) and Imogene Wright Collier (Gerald Collier), Byron Wright (Marilyn Reeves), Betty Wright Delph (Leroy Delph), Vivian Wright Jordan (Glen Jordan), Janet Wright Ramsey (Gene Ramsey), Beverley Ann Wright Messick (Gary Messick). Many of this family were born and raised in Shirley, Indiana, on what was called "Billy Goat Hill" which was just east of the railroad tracks behind the old Kraft factory.

Gerald Wright was the son of Clem A. Wright and Bertha May Wright (Green) of Converse and New Castle, Indiana. Gerald's wife, Mable Wright, was the daughter of Frank William "Happy" Harris (Martinsville, Indiana) and Mary Jane "Molly" Hendricks Harris (New Castle, Indiana). All resided in Shirley and raised their families. Gerald Wright was long employed by the Ingersoll Steel Mills of New Castle, Indiana.

Of interest to many is the connection of the Gerald A. Wright family to Orville and Wilber Wright of aviation fame. Orville and Wilber were sons of Bishop Milton Wright. Milton was a Bishop of the Brethren Church. The genealogical connection was second cousin, Hosea S. Wright (1833), and Hosea S. Wright, Jr. (1784). These families were circa Dayton, Ohio, New Castle, Winchester, Converse, Indiana. Gabriel (b. 1704) and wife, Deborah Wright are key genealogical connections for these families.

Ann Mable Wright was the daughter of Frank "Happy Harris" and Mary Jane "Molly" Hendricks Harris. "Happy", a wallpaper hanger by vocation, was known to be an interesting character around Shirley, Indiana. In his book, "He Just Showed Up", great grandson, Gary E. Wright describes, "One night in a drunken stupor he collapsed on the bed at home. Suddenly, he awoke to experiencing alcohol delirium tremens, seeing things crawling and creeping on the walls. Frightened, my great grandfather dressed and headed down the street seeking his godly little wife. He knew where she was. She was in church at one of those scheduled "revivals." He quickly went into the new little block church and sat next to his wife. The church was stunned. They had been praying for his salvation. They talked to him and encouraged him to pray and seek Christ. He did not that night, nevertheless, "Happy" returned the next night and at the age of fifty-five became a new creation in Christ. Dad said people made bets in the bars on when he would come back for the addictive beverages and all that went with them. All bets were lost, and in turn, our family won a Godly heritage. I am told that the owner of his favorite tavern would

confront “Happy” on the sidewalk in front of the tavern, and unsuccessfully, compel and coerce him to return to drink. The joy that could be heard in my dad's voice and on his face when discussing his grandfather convinced me that this is a man, I should look forward to meeting one day on the other side. At times, “Happy” Harris attended the little Friends (Quaker) Church in Shirley, Indiana. (I have preached and sung there on many occasions). Dad described hearing him stand during testimony time and share how God saved him from his life of drinking and sin with tears rolling down his cheeks. He said "Happy" would get happy at such times of expression. Sometimes, he was known to play his musical instruments, flipping them backwards over his shoulder, between his legs and then back up to playing position when he became overly blessed or happy. He would state "I used to do this for the devil, now I will celebrate for the Lord." I am not sure that is an exact quote but something like that was said.

However, “Happy” Harris’s greatest accomplishment was what he did with his daughter’s (Mabel Harris Wright) children. He was often asked to lead and provide the worship music for church and planned revival events. He took his grandchildren with him teaching them to play musical instruments and to harmonize on the vocals. He trained and disciplined them. They all became church leaders, musicians, who were very fruitful all their lives. (Wright, Gary. *He Just Showed Up! An Eyewitness to Revival* (pp. 21-22). Wright Stuff Publishing. Kindle Edition).

Another interesting tale of Harris the “Shirley Paperhanger” was from his early morning work. A Shirley widow hired Harris to wallpaper a room. On the last day of the project, she paid Harris early so he could purchase, in Indianapolis, supplies needed to finish the job. Unfortunately, Harris also purchased and consumed alcoholic beverages (this was prior to his faith in Christ) then finished the wallpaper job. The widow, looking at her new wallpaper, said, “Mr. Harris, something doesn’t look right?” “Oh, it will be alright when it dries,” Harris explained. During the night, when the effects of the alcohol dissipated, Harris awoke to a new insight. He realized in his inebriated state he had hung the penguin designed border upside down! Quietly, returning to the house through the widow, careful not to awaken her, Harris removed the border and placed it correctly, then left the house. Later, when he returned in the morning to collect his tools, Harris found a happy customer. “Mr. Harris, you were right, when the wallpaper dried it looks just great!” Such was the life in Shirley, Indiana.”

Enough. I have told you everything that I know and some things I don't. Talk to me at jskvarenina@hotmail.com, the Daily Reporter, or on Facebook at Joes Hancock Historic Corner.

2024-07-17

Hancock Central

By Joe Skvarenina

Greg Roland shares with us information about Hancock Central probably written by Judy Maroska.

"In September 1944 a group of eager youngsters enlisted in the primary room at Eden School and another group in Maxwell. Little did they realize that 12 years hence they would be graduating together in the first class of Hancock Central School. Of these students we all went 12 years together at Maxwell to together at Eden and Judy Maroska and Kyle Hatfield alternated between Maxwell and Eden.

At the beginning of the school year of September 1955 , 40 seniors enrolled at Central and at the end of the first semester , Shirley Smith and Judy Garriott moved. They were dropped form class enrollment although they completed their requirement to receive a diploma from Hancock Central High School. Kyle Hatfield withdrew from school leaving a class of 37 seniors. Nine boys of the class of 56 are on the varsity and four of the five cheerleaders were seniors.

The student body earlier in the school year chooses red and black for school colors and the panther as mascot. Although it was probably harder for Seniors they stored away as memories the black and gold—purple and gold—the Flyers and Loons—that they have rooted for several years and loyally joined together to support the Central Panthers...A gift to the school the class on 56 presented a trophy case...The Baccalaureate will be held in the High School Gym on Sunday May 6 and the Commencement on Monday May 7 . This will be the last time that the students will meet as a group as the Class of 56."

Do you have memories of Hancock Central? Enough. I have told you everything that I know and some things I don't. Talk to be at jskvarenina@hotmail.com, the Daily Reporter or on Facebook at Joe's Hancock Historic Corner.

2024-07-10

Delany Cemetery

By Joe Skvarenina

Jim and Phyllis Arthur live in the old Delany Tavern and store the on-State Road 52 in New Palestine. Jim tells, "The correct spelling is John Delany not John Delaney. Reference original deeds, tomb stones and GLO land patents. The error was made in Binford's History of Hancock County of 1882 page 276 where John Delany was the first merchant of Sugar Creek Township and then John Delany shown in the Historical Anecdote as John Delaney. On page 275 John Delany was listed as one of the first settlers. Publisher's proofreading error which has been perpetuated for over 100 years?" The Tavern and store operated many years before the Civil War. Mrs. Delany was known along the Brookville Road (State Road 52) as a good cook for miles around. In the 1850 census Delany family was listed as mulatto. Further records indicated the John and Sarah Delany were wealthy landowners having \$7,700 of real estate.

John purchased 148.24 acres in 1833 not 140 per original deeds of 1825 (The United States of America to James Parker), 1833 (Parker to Delany) and 1860 (Delany) to Nichols. James Parker was from Hancock County not Rush per the original deed of 1833. He was from Rush County in the 1825 deed. Before John Delany's death in 1863 he sold the property to William Nichols in 1860 per the original deed. Seven rooms of the original tavern, not four remain. Delany Cemetery has been surveyed with ground penetrating radar and there are many more unmarked graves outside of the fenced area." Jim tells the documents may be viewed upon request. Jim thanks us for letting him help correct a little bit of history. The Delany is the only African American Cemetery in Hancock County. It is located in section -thirty on the north side of State Road 52, one mile west of New Palestine. John Delany died in March 1863. His heirs included Josiah P. Delany, William H. Delany, Sarah Delany, Cicero and Susan Melson. Matilda Delany, Jacob Malson and Levin Cambridge. In a later document the Cambridge folks are listed as white.

Enough. I have told you everything that I know and some things I don't. Talk to me at jskvarenina@hotmail.com, the Daily Reporter or on Facebook at Joe's Hancock Historic Corner.

2024-07-03

Greenfield Confederate

By Joe Skvarenina

Linda Dunn shares with us information about the Confederate soldier in Park Cemetery. Greenfield's Park Cemetery has a tombstone noting the service of Josiah "Joseph" Hooker, who was born in 1846 in Randolph County, North Carolina and served in F. Company, 1st Regiment, NC Junior Reserves in the CSA (Confederate States of America). Hooker's gravestone wasn't approved and delivered until nine years after his burial. It's a long process and daughter Cora's name was on the application paperwork. He was the son of Isham Hooker (1819-1884) and Martha Bell (1819-1890). Isham also served in the CSA during the Civil War and relocated to Henry County by the time of the 1870 census. His grave is located in Iowa. Joseph married Amanda Ellen Kirkpatrick (1850-1930) in 1869 in Henry County, Indiana. They had son Orlando (1872-1953) and daughters Florence (1870-1930), Minnie (1880-1900), Cora (1886-1965) and Dollie. Josiah was a farm laborer and Amanda was a housekeeper. In 1880, he was living in Jackson township, Hancock County, was a farmer age 34 and they had children Florence (9) and Orlando (8). By 1890 they were living on Pratt Street in Greenfield, had been married 31 years, and Joseph was a well driver. Cora (14) was the only child still living at home and William Lineback (40) was living with them. Joseph was literate and they lived in a mortgaged home.

In 1910, Joseph listed his occupation as a gardener and in 1920 he was a trucker. He died 12 Mar 1925 in Hancock County. At the time of his death, he was living at 420 north Wood street, a widow, and lived with his unmarried daughter, Cora. Surviving him in addition to Cora were Orlando Hooker of Anderson, and daughters Minnie Windsor of Anderson and Florence Alford near Stringtown. Cora later became Mrs. Cora Millikan of Greenfield. Amanda died 6 Jun 1948 at the age of 98.

Father Isham also served in the Civil War, and he relocated with his family to Wayne, Henry County by the time of the 1870 census. His brother, Thomas Lemuel Hooker (1847-1903) died in Knightstown 26 Dec 1903. He was a grandson of Robert Hooker (who served in the war of 1812 in Capt. Joshua Craven's Co. NC Militia).

His son, Orlando was an employee of Delco Remy who married Flora Brammer and had two sons: Orville (a school superintendent at Marion, Indiana) and Robert K. Hooker, of Anderson. His daughter was Mrs. Ray White and lived in Ohio. At the time of his death, he had eight grandchildren and three great-grandchildren.

Thanks, Linda. I have told you everything that I know and some things I don't. Talk to me at jskvarenina@hotmail.com, the Daily Reporter or on Facebook at Joe's Hancock Historic Corner.

2024-06-26

Ninestar Reminiscences

By Joe Skvarenina

Don Shaw, from Sulphur Springs, remembers living in a house with no electricity or telephone. They heated the house with coal and used kerosene lamps. In 1942, they got electricity. Parents were farmers and lived through the depression. They brought electricity to the barn when Don was 7 or 8 years old. Prior to that, they milked by hand and with electricity they could buy electric milkers. In 1946-47, they got water in the house and a bathroom. HREMC, Hancock Rural Telephone, and now Ninestar made a real difference in standards of living in the county. Don was on the board of Sulphur Springs, HRTC, and now Ninestar.

Darrell Thomas tells us that the two-story log cabin (20 feet x 18 feet) was built on his property between 1830 and 1850 of poplar and chestnut logs. It was assumed that the cabin was originally built on the location in front of our new home which we built in 1991. Each corner of the old cabin sat on large field stones. Later a brick foundation was placed under each outside wall. My great grandfather had arrived on the farm in 1865 from Nicholas County Kentucky (Blue Lick Springs) with his wife, Sarah. Grandfather John W. Thomas, was born there in 1874, and lived there his entire life until he died in 1964. Darrell goes on to tell that two rooms of this cabin were at one time the home for the first McCordsville Telephone Company Exchange. McCordsville is the parent company of Hancock County Telecom. Darrell Thomas has served on McCordsville, HRTC and Ninestar Boards.

John D. Wilson shares, "Uncle Charles Denny was interested in electric lights for the farm. The only source for power was a Delco Battery System, with power from a gasoline engine. Oliver Wilson went to Dayton, Ohio, with Uncle Charley to attend the Delco Power Annual meeting. They drove Uncle Charley's new Nash. Uncle Charley bought a Delco plant, a very expensive power source...bought our first radio in 1929, a battery operated 'Crosley'. My favorite programs were 'Lum and Abner' and 'WLS Barn Dance'. Finally, Dad, Oliver Wilson, bought the family farm from Grandpa Bob. Then things changed. We bought a new John Deere tractor, plow and cultivator for \$850. In 1938, electricity came to our place by the Rural Electric Cooperative. The first night we had electricity, we turned on all the lights in the house and walked south to the bridge on Buck Creek so we could look at them. The barn was not wired until 1942. Plumbing was put into the house after Grandpa died in 1947." Prior to being manager of the REMC, John Wilson was president of the Board of Directors from 1935 to 1939.

Bob Holland said "My parents got on a four-party line in 1956. Phone numbers started with FA6-0000 for Maxwell area. Each party had a different ring tone – long, short, or a combination."

Jim Cherry tells that his "grandfather, Almond Wichard, built a new farmhouse in 1916, on the farm, after the former house burned. Grandfather Wichard had foresight and the new house was wired for electricity before REMC was even available in the area. He would have to wait for a period of 20 years before getting it. So, he built poles across the field to tap into the Country

Club Electricity which had it from the city. The farmstead finally got REMC service in the 1940s. The family homestead was located on 100 South and brother Bob Cherry currently resides there. Both grandfathers were farmers in the county and at Morristown. They used electrical milkers. They would play the radio for the cows which would give more milk when the music was playing.” Jim lobbied to allow the merger. Bev Gard helped to push the legislation. Approved by 85 percent at the company meeting and over 4,000 people attended. Now every farm can get fiber. Also, we used the telephone party line and was the original Uber-local widower would request cigarettes when we went to town.

What do you remember about electricity or the telephone on the farm in the earlier days.

Enough. I have told you everything that I know and some things I don't. Talk to me at jskvarenina@hotmail.com, the Daily Reporter or on Facebook at Joe's Hancock Historic Corner.

2024-06-19

The Alford Family, Eden Pioneers

By Joe Skvarenina

Greg Murphy tells, "I enjoyed your article in the Reporter today, I knew Judy White, she worked in Elanco the same time I did. I wasn't aware her maiden name was Alford. I have done extensive research on the Alford (also spelled Allford) family, back to John Lambert Alford 1802-1883." John L. Allford died at his residence near Eden, April 9, 1883, aged 80 years, 4 months and 29 days. Greg Murphy shares with us information on John Allford obit from the 1883 Hancock County Democrat newspaper.

According to the Democrat newspaper "It is with a feeling of deep sorrow and keen apprehension of our inability to do justice to one so universally loved and admired as the subject of this sketch, that we are called upon to chronicle his death. John Lambert Allford, the subject of these remarks, was born in Monroe County, Virginia, Dec. 10, 1802. He came to Ohio about the year 1832, thence to Hancock County, Ind., in 1834, where he entered the land on which he died -- which also at that time included the present site of Eden. He returned to Ohio during the same year, and married Miss Eliza Brawley, to whom he was previously engaged. Returning soon after with his bride to his then frowning wilderness, he built a log cabin and thus began his pioneer life.

Mr. Allford, or Uncle Lambert, as he was familiarly known, was characterized as a man of iron will, strong constitution, industrious habits, and least of all, as a man of a strictly pious and religious life. By his untiring energy and perseverance, he converted the forests into blooming fields, and built the stately residence where he spent the remainder of his days. He was also a leading spirit in the organization of the first church in Eden, and to the time of his death a consistent and honored member. His Christian life is one that all should strive to equal; by his exemplary life he left to the world an untarnished reputation, and a name that will ever remain green in the memory of all who knew him.

February 19, 1865, he was called to mourn the loss of his beloved companion, who died at the age of 50 years. Left with a large family of children, two of whom were quite young, the mother's care fell to the older daughter, Mrs. Sidney Moore, and the remarkable manner in which she performed her part no mother could excel. The deceased was the father of eleven children, four of whom are dead. He has lived to see his surviving children all married, but one and all comfortably situated, besides leaving them a handsome legacy. His declining years were spent in comparative ease, receiving every attention that care could bestow, although very feeble, he was almost a stranger to sickness; but age had done its work, and by contracting a cold after a brief illness, it terminated in his death. The beckoning angel came, and he died as he lived, in peace with God and man. On the 10th inst., his remains were followed to the grave by a large concourse of friends and relatives. He was buried at the Eden cemetery. Funeral services were conducted by Rev. Miles Walker who had been his personal friend for over half a century, and many were fitting eulogies he offered to his fair name. The grief-stricken family has the sympathy of the entire community..."

Enough. I have told you everything that I know and some things I don't. Talk to me at jskvarenina@hotmail.com, the Daily Reporter, or on Facebook at Joe's Hancock Historic Corner.

2024-06-12

COL

By Joe Skvarenina

Diana Martin," writes," I absolutely loved the article February 14 article on the Dye Cemetery. Since I'm 82 and have so many unique memories of the " old days" , this fits into my history !"

If you are doing some family research Sue Baker's book on Hancock County Tombstones 1883 to 1933 is a good one to have. I know a copy is available in the history room at the Hancock Public Library. It is an interest point that recording of deaths was not required until 1882, making finding early grave sites dependent on pioneer and family records. There are 92 cemeteries in Hancock County.

The Pleasant View Cemetery in Blue River Township is interesting. The plot is maintained privately with assistance from Walnut Creek Fiends in Rush County. At one time a church stood at the site. Services had been held in a nearby schoolhouse until 1851 when a church was built near the cemetery. In 1880 the average attendance was 30. In the 1890's no services were held, and the church was closed. The church was moved and used as a house until the 1960's. History records a mystery at this point because the tombstones carry the same inscriptions as Gilboa Cemetery.

Another is the Sugar Creek Cemetery in Center Township on a lane east of 200N. The Sugar Creek Methodist was founded in 1838. Two years later the congregation bought land from Richard Hutson and built a log church. The cost of the land was \$25.00. In 1877 the congregation built a frame building at a cost of \$1,500. Services were held at the site until 1916. At this point no one knows what happened to the building and there is no trace of the church. All that is left at the site is the cemetery. My wife's family the Barnard's has several graves at the site. She tells me she learned to swim in Sugar Creek. Do any of you know if the building was moved and used for something else?

Enough. I have told you everything that I know and some things I don't. Talk to me at jskvarenina@hotmail.com, the Daily Reporter or on Facebook at Joe's Hancock Historic Corner.

2024-06-05

Hancock Central High School

By Joe Skvarenina

Just recently I had a request for information about the arches in front of the Greenfield Central School offices. This all that remains of the Riley School located at West North and Pennsylvania Streets, this Romanesque revival structure was built in 1895 as Greenfield High School. Constructed of rough cut blocks of stone, the structure was ponderous with massive towers and acceded entry porch. There were 17 teachers in the old high school. The building also served the community as library, until 1908, and in later years as the Riley Elementary School until 1981. The Riley School was being renovated to convert its former classrooms to luxury condominiums when it burned down the night of April 30, 1985. Later the Riley Physicians built their arches around the school arch. After that it became the Central School offices for the corporation. My daughter went to Riley elementary and I do remember attending chili suppers at the site.

In 1925 a new high school was built. The building was placed on the location of the Old West Building or Washington School. At the close of the basketball season in 1926, the Greenfield Holding Company was formed to promote the erection of adequate gymnasium of the high school and community. Both these still exist at the site. I hope that this answers some of the questions.

Speaking of schools do you remember Mike O'Neal, and he was a great guy. Mike was a 1959 graduate of the old Hancock Central High School. In 1955 the old Maxwell School building burned although an elementary school behind the main structure was saved as was the gym which was demolished years later. As a result of the fire, Center Township joined with Green Township to form the Hancock Central School District in 1955. New additions were added to the gym and the elementary at Maxwell and that became the location of the Hancock Central High.

Thanks to Greg Roland. Here is Hancock Central fight song:

"WE are loyally for Central,
Our high school is so grand,
Proudly we shall ever hail thee,
Overall, the land,
We sing our praises to your colors,
The red and black display,
We are loyally for Central,
Forever and a Day."

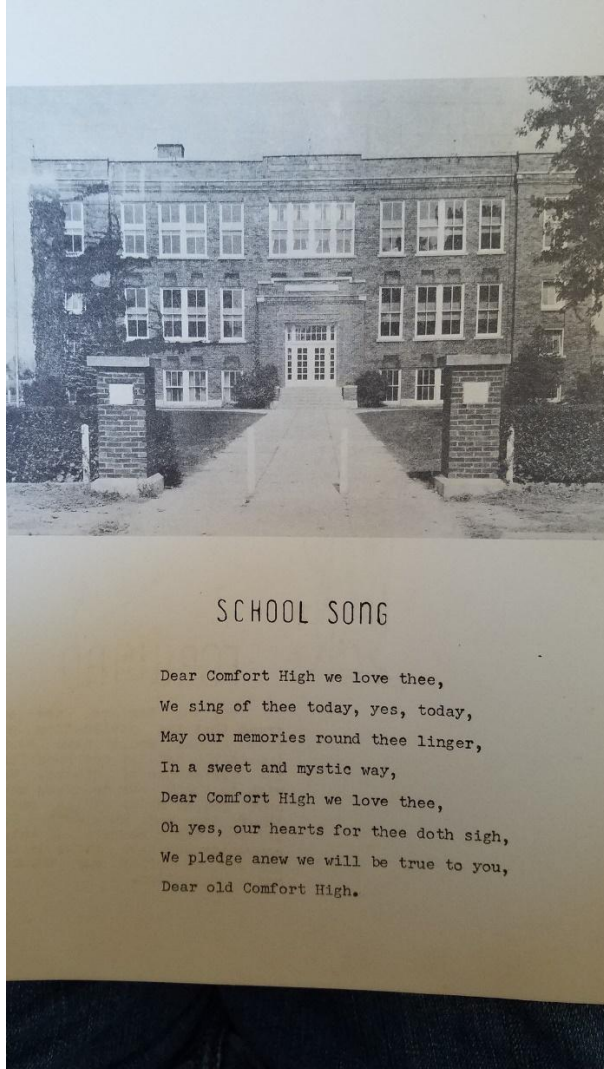
Enough. I have told you everything that I know and some things I don't. Talk to me at jskvarenina@hotmail.com, the Daily Reporter, or on Facebook at Joe's Hancock Historic Corner.

2024-05-29

Mt. Comfort School

By Joe Skvarenina

Here is the MT Comfort School fight song



It was sung to the tune of Notre Dame Fight Song. We thank Rebecca Crowe and Kim Mitten for providing it.

The three year program began in Mt. Comfort in 1903. The oldest record lists Joseph A. Land as the first enrolled. April 10, 1906 Harvey Griffey certified Land's record along with Nettie Sanford. The next three year graduating class lists Allen Eastes, Floyd Parker, Roscoe Hurley and Nettie Sanford. In 1908 Harvey Griffey certified Jesse N Snider as a graduate. In 1909 Beryl Eastes, Pearl King, Edith Keller, Frank Newman, and Flossie Hurley graduated. During the summer the school was given accredited for a four year program and the class returned and graduating again in 1910. Harvey Griffey was principal from 1906 to 1909. The first graduating

class for which four year records were kept was for the class of 1911. The graduates were Lenna Byers, Elbert Griffin, Hazel Shelby, Ethel Snider and Victor Stoner. The ceremony was held April 7, 1911. There were two high school teachers. They taught English, Geometry, Algebra, Latin, Ancient, Medieval, American History, Business Arithmetic, Commercial and Physical Geography and rudimentary Physics and Botany. Two teachers taught 7 or 8 classes a day.

The remaining section of the old school was demolished with the improvements. On the inside of the school is an old Mt. Comfort Band uniform in a class case. My wife's sister and father attend Mt. Comfort. Her father was known for his basketball ability and his nickname was Turk.

Enough. I have told you everything that I know and some things I don't. Talk to me at jskvarenina@hotmail.com, the Daily Reporter or on Facebook at Joes' Hancock Historic Corner.

2024-05-22

Fortville School

By Joe Skvarenina

Reta Williams wants to know school fight songs for area schools some of which are no longer in existence. Long time educator Darrell Thomas writes, "Nancy and I should remember McCordsville , but struggled with all of it; I will look through some of our historic files; also, the four years of Vernon Township High School was a different fight song (1960- 1963). I assume New Pal still has the same one from many years ago. Most all fight songs back then were copied (music) from college fight songs. I believe the present MVHS one was written by Stan Ricks. Sent from my iPhone

The current location of Landmark Park is on the site of the Fortville High/grade school and adjacent track area (the track area is now)a soccer field bordered by Leland St to the east-- Church, School Streets and Stottlemeyer Ditch. the point---during the early 1900's this was referred to as the "COMMONS". I was told the citizens on a first come first serve basis could have a garden plot, stake out Ol Bessie to graze etc. I am guessing this came to a halt when the property was purchased for a school. A wonderful idea for the community! My wife Cheryl went to school in Fortville school.

Greg Roland provides us with the Vernon Vikings school fight song: "Go Vernon Vikings win the game tonight."

"We will ever stand strong when put to the test. Fight! Fight! Fight! Go Vernon Vikings we will never fail. Sail on to fame with our great name. Vernon Vikings wins the game." I don't know if the Fortville High School had a fight song. Do you know?

Enough I have told you everything that I know and some things I don't. Talk to me at jskvarenina@hotmail.com, or on Facebook at Joe's Hancock Historic Corner.

2024-05-15

School Songs

By Joe Skvarenina

Reta Williams writes, "I am currently working on an Indiana School Song Project. I am attempting to find the words to school fight songs in the Indiana high schools that were closed due to consolidation. Last December I was interviewed by Dana Hunsinger Benbow of the Indy Star. The article appeared online the first part of December and in the printed edition 13 December 2023. When I was interviewed, had less than 50 songs. After the article appeared in the paper, I am at 270 songs. I have put letters to the editor in many, many Indiana papers and am now traveling to counties where I have not had much response." For the 1920's high school now the Lincoln School apartments Marciann McClarnon Miller tells, "I was the cheer black captain in 1969 for Greenfield's so I notice the song quite well. I still have my shirt and mittens. We used the Indiana University Melody:

Greenfield High School
Oh, Greenfield High School
Greenfield High School
Greenfield High School, we're all for you.

We will fight for
the black and golden
and the glory of GHS

Never daunted
We shall not falter
In the battle so tried and true

Greenfield High School,
oh Greenfield High School
Greenfield High School
We're all for you!

And then we would cheer.....GHS, GHS, we're for you and you're the best!

Fun fact, my mom, Joanne McClarnon was the first girl cheerleader for Greenfield. She had to wear slacks."

Do you remember the old Riley School. It burned down on April 30, 1985. The arch at the front of the Greenfield Central School offices is all that remains of the Riley School. It was at West North and Pennsylvania Streets; the Romanesque Revival structure was built in 1895 as Greenfield High School. Constructed out of rough-cut blocks of stone, the structure was ponderous with massive towers and arcade entry porch. The school served the community as the first library and an elementary school before it burned. Around 1925 a bid from a Greensburg

firm indicated the cost of a proposed new Greenfield High School would not be less than \$117,854. The building was placed on the same location of the West Building or Washington School. At the close of basketball season in 1926, the Greenfield Holding Company was formed to promote the erection of an adequate gymnasium for the high school and the community. This building was also known as Lincoln Park, which was an elementary school and today, I do believe it is the Lincoln Square apartments.

Enough. I have told you everything that I know and some things I don't. Contact me at jskvarenina@hotmail.com, the Daily Reporter of on Facebook at Joe's Hancock Historic Corner.

2024-05-08

City Police

By Joe Skvarenina

I was proud to have the opportunity to work with Charlie Gildwell on his history of the City Police force. Charlie is gone now but I thought I would share some of the history with you. Charlie tells us...

The Greenfield Police Department was indeed established in 1850 when Greenfield Was incorporated with a town Marshall system and the first serving Marshall was indeed N.P. Howard who was appointed because the elected Town Marshall wouldn't serve after being elected. The first Greenfield Police Chief was John Francis Mulvihill who was appointed in 1926 he later became a Justice of the Peace. The Greenfield Police Department also was responsible for animal control until approximately 1970. Officers carried a snare in the trunk of their vehicles, the dog pound was located in an old barn on what is now Davis Road just west of the old Greenfield open Dump which is where the current F.O.P. Lodge is at, animals which were not claimed were destroyed once a week. There was also a red light atop of a telephone pole on the North East corner of State and Main with a call box also located on the pole. A police car would be parked at the South East corner of State and Main and when the red light came on they would go to the call box and call in. The Greenfield Police Department has had four homes the first being in the Hancock County Court House, the Police department moved to the newly constructed City Hall in 1956 and occupied the Northeast corner of City Hall, the Police Department then moved to 23 West South Street in 1963. In 1977 the Police Department moved to its current location at 116 South State Street.

The Mulvihill House is a big yellow house on Main Street with a small office area in the front from which the Justice presided.

Enough. I have told you everything that I know and some things I don't. Talk to me at jskvarenina@hotmail.com, the Daily Reporter or Joe's Hancock Historic Corner, 30

2024-05-01

Malcolm Grass and Nick Gulling

By Joe Skvarenina

Malcolm Grass was appointed Sheriff in 1974. He was elected sheriff in his own right in 1975 and 1979. After his second term as the chief law enforcement officer of the county he stayed with the department as a detective. On May 8th, 1986 he was gunned down in the line of duty. Malcolm died attempting to prevent the commission of a federal crime of extortion which the FBI was jointly investigating with the Hancock County Sheriff's Department. Former Sheriff grass died in a gun battle with a single bullet to the head. Brothers Marvin Dale Castor and Gerald Castor had planned to make a pick up of extorted money from their former employer Sugar Creek Resorts at a Standard Oil Station on State Route Nine, just north of Interstate 70 just north of Greenfield. The brothers had demanded \$250,000 or they would turn over documents to the authorities outlining fraudulent business dealings of William Collett, the Chief Executive Officer of Ventures, Inc. the resort owner. Malcolm was 31 years old when appointed as Sheriff and 32 years old when elected After both terms he served as Chief of Investigations. Malcolm had two major aims in his life, one that law enforcement be the best possible and the concern for children. As a result the family directed that flowers from the funeral be omitted and donations be made to the Malcolm Grass Memorial Scholarship Fund. Many current law enforcement officers had benefited from the scholarship efforts. In addition the outstanding 4-H club participant receives the Malcolm E. Grass award. There is a Malcolm Grass Memorial in Shirley Indiana, his hometown. Malcolm was a Republican since 1954.

Nicholas Gulling was elected sheriff in 1982, 1986, 1998, and 2002. In the mid 1980's the Sheriff started Community Corrections in cooperation with the Prosecutor's Office. Gulling views his participation in this effort as the most positive in saving the community correction dollars. The Main Street jail was built in 1988 under his watchful eye. It was designed to hold 63 inmates with the maximum capacity being 125. The jail is 53,000 square feet. The jail operates an effective GED (General Education Development). It also operates an intervention program. Volunteers operate AA and Al-Anon programs. Gulling started a SWAT team and combined it with the Scuba Team. A Law Enforcement Explorer program for boys and girls ages 5-20 was started in 1983. In the early 1990s the 911 Center cooperative was established to be a public service answering point and an emergency management dispatch center for the county. Gulling's department also sponsored two missions, 9/11 to NYC and the other to New Orleans for Hurricane Katrina. Eighty-one thousand dollars plus was raised in Hancock County to aid the families of fallen rescue workers in New York. Tools, hospital equipment, canned goods were collected into two semis sent to New Orleans for the relief effort. The SWAT team was also sent to New Orleans. Also, Tom Harrison established a "Shop with a Cop" program. In addition, the Sheriff's Department sponsored a "Fallen Hero Memorial" at the FOP Lodge on Davis Road. This Memorial was initially a scout project by George Williamson. The Fallen Heroes include Malcolm Grass, Danny Garrison and Will Phillips. Two high profile cases under Gulling included the Dobbins murder in Eden and the Confederate Air Force murder. Nick has, also, served as Jail Commander for six years, State Representative for six years, and had been with

the State Police for 12 years prior to joining the Hancock County Sheriff 's Department. He later passed away from cancer.

Enough. I have told you everything that I know and some things I don't Talk to me at jksvarenina@hotmail.com, the Daily Reporter or on Facebook at Joe's Hancock Historic Corner.

2024-04-24

REMC

By Joe Skvarenina

The idea of electric lights on Hancock County farms seemed a distant dream in 1934, when Hancock County Farm Bureau President John T. Wilson of Green Township first brought up the idea at a meeting. During the fall of that year, the Indiana Farm Bureau Cooperative Association led an initiative to establish the Indiana Rural Electric Act which was passed by the Indiana General Assembly in 1935. That law provided for a charter and franchise for cooperative corporations to provide electricity to unserved areas of the state.

On August 14, 1935, an organizational meeting of 39 people from various Hancock County townships was held at the Memorial Building in Greenfield, to establish the Hancock County Rural Electric Membership Corporation (REMC). Fifteen incorporators signed the Articles of Incorporation and seven directors were elected to the Board: John T. Wilson, president (Green Township); Claude Grist, vice president (Buck Creek Township); Russell Cushman, secretary (Vernon Township); Frank L. Marsh, treasurer (Center Township); W. Roy Hasler (Brown Township); L.H. Collins (Jackson Township); John S. Bentley (Blue River Township).

At the beginning of 1936, residents in unserved areas were solicited to become members of the new cooperative. By March 16, 968 people had become members. April 21, the Articles of Incorporation were filed with the Secretary of State and the following day an application was filed with the Indiana Public Service Commission (now known as the Indiana Utility Regulatory Commission). The Articles of Incorporation were approved May 22, and the Hancock County REMC was officially created. The first loan from the REMC was \$325,000 made November 22, 1936. Bids for line construction were accepted in April. During the summer months of 1937, REMC approved funds of \$41,600.41 for the construction of lines on Hancock, Shelby, Marion, Johnson, Bartholomew and Decatur counties. The first pole was set November 1, 1936, on the Charles Brandle Farm in Vernon Township. The first miles of line energized were 325 miles. The first homes energized were on May 17, 1938, due west of Willow Branch. The individuals energized were George Seal and Noble Watson. The number of homes energized was 815. The average price of electric bills when the co-op first began was \$3. Price per kwh of electricity when the co-op was first organized – the first kwh was \$0.075, the next 30 kwhs for \$0.05, the next 170 kwhs for \$0.03, and all over 230 kwhs for \$0.02 per kwh. The average members per mile when first energized was 2.4. The first headquarters was located at 12 West Main Street in the Greenfield Arcade Building. Miss Martha Ellen Boland was the secretary in charge of the office. “Soon electric lights will blaze from the farm house windows where for years the only illumination was the subtle light of kerosene lamps...food will be kept fresh and pure in electric refrigerators ... food will be cooked perfectly on electric ranges...cows will be milked by electric machines and cream will be separated electrically or be churned electrically and electricity will pump a pure supply of water into modern bathrooms.” The progress of modern convenience had come to the farm. Today the REMC is known as Ninestar.

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2024-04-17

Newton Spencer

By Joe Skvarenina

Newton Spencer Ramsey was born in Parke County on March 5, 1855 to Robert and Mary A (Ramsey). His father was in the mercantile business. He had two sisters, Mary and Martha. His father died July 28, 1865. Newton was forced to earn a living at a young age.

Newton taught school in Fayette and Henry Counties. He studied law with Joseph I. Little and David McKee in Connersville. In 1888 he was admitted to the Bar in Indianapolis and moved to Johnson County Kansas to practice law. In Kansas he served one term as prosecuting attorney. In 1890 he came to Greenfield to practice law with E.J. Binford. He had married Viola Banks on November 26, 1885. She was the daughter of Andrew J. and Viola Banks. Banks were also involved in the mercantile business. Their home at 22 North Pennsylvania Street has been occupied by six generations of the family. In 1894 he served one term as Center Township Justice of the Peace.

When Newton Spencer came to Greenfield there were many local newspapers. These publications included the Hancock Jeffersonian owned by Richard Strickland with an annual subscription fee of \$1.00, the Greenfield Globe/Daily/ Evening Star owned by Ben Strickland, the Wednesday morning Greenfield Republican, the Hancock County Democrat, the Herald, the Evening Tribune plus probably others. In 1899 he took charge of the Evening Tribune and the Weekly Republican from W.S. Montgomery until his appointment as Postmaster on JUNE 5, 1902. In 1904 Newton Spencer was one of the founders and a President and one of the founders of Associated Charities of Greenfield. After his duties ended as Postmaster in 1906 Newton Spencer bought interest in Greenfield Weekly Globe and the Evening/Daily Star in December 1906 with Ben Strickland and a third partner Eugene E. Davis. It was printed at the Globe plant in Greenfield. He eventually sold his interest and established the Daily Reporter on April 27, 1908. He was actively assisted by his wife Viola in the operations of the newspaper.

In March 1909 he bought from Greenfield Printing and Publishing or Ben Strickland the Evening Star and its subscription list for \$200. In 1910 Newton bought from Walter S. Montgomery the Evening Tribune and the Weekly Republican and merged then with the Daily Reporter. Marshall Winslow had been with the Tribune and the Republican when it was sold by W.S. Montgomery. Marshall served as City editor until he went to Europe with the Red Cross in WW I. After the war he came back to Greenfield and went to work for the Hancock County Democrat. It might be interesting to note that Spencer served as Hancock County Republican Chairman from 1896-1900.

Enough. I have told you everything that I know and some things I don't. Talk to me at jskvarenina@hotmail.com, the Daily Reporter or on Facebook at Joe's Hancock Historic Corner.

2024-04-10

Dale Spencer

By Joe Skvarenina

A package was laid on my doorstep the other day with a note, "A bit of History with which we hope you can help. The enclosed dictionary was found many years ago in the old reporter building (Spencer Building) on Main Street. We are confident this was a gift from Dorothy Spencer to Dale Spencer in the early 1960's...Please find home for it..." The book is a leather-bound gold leaf Websters.

Dale Banks Spencer, who was born in 1899, had also learned the business from the top down. He was a carrier at the age of 9 and had also worked in the print shop and the business office. In 1920 he joined the staff of the paper full-time . He graduated from Indiana University with a degree in Journalism. he married Dorothea Bruner during his senior year. He eventually became editor of the paper. Dorothea also worked at the paper in the business office. Dorothea and Dale had three children Richard, Phyllis, and Dorothea Dale.

In 1946 at the death of his mother Dale Banks Spencer became publisher. He would be associated with the paper in some capacity or another for 62 years. In May of 1946 his son Richard Dale Spencer joined the staff of the paper and eventually became editor.

According to the local newspaper stories of the time on Dale Spencer also had a brilliant command of the English language and an editorial 'sense' that would classify him among the best of newspaper opinion writers...His judgment on local affairs was always on target." Dale was a life lone Republican and precinct committee man for 25 years and local party leader. In 1933 he ran for the House of Representatives but was defeated in the Roosevelt landslide.

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2024-04-03

Practice Bomb

By Joe Skvarenina

Gene Addison writes, " Just a note regarding Weir Cook----I was a sophomore in 1943 in Wilkinson High School, in the afternoon a a very powerful plane buzzed the High school, it makes a noise like we never heard, everyone ran to the windows to see what it was, it was Weir Cook in a P-38 fighter, He buzzed the school two more times. I don't believe anyone one in Wilkinson had ever seen this plane before. It was thrilling to say the least. It highlighted the fact that we were at war." WW II involved the entire community. Many war industries in the surrounding area produced materials extremely important to the war. The tomato packing plants Greenfield's Frazier Packing and Shirley's Foods produced food stuffs. Crops were picked in Hancock county by German prisoners of war held at Morristown and Camp Atterbury. I have been told that Italian prisoners of war picked tomatoes at the site of the old Kmart. Small factories around the county like Fountaintown Forge produced parts for Jeeps, tanks, and even concrete practice bombs were produced by the Boyer Plant in Greenfield. In fact, those bombs line the drive at the Greenfield Cemetery at certain locations still today. Rationing during WWII soon placed limits on most things needed in daily life and at first it seemed reasonable .But as time went on it became more and more unbearable. On the last page of the 1944 Greenfield High School Yearbook carried this note, "We can't buy sugar, we can't buy shoes-and are tires are flat -we got the blues." I guess this sum it up the best. The Ration Board had begun operations in 1942. Tires were one of the first things rationed. A flat on the family vehicle could quickly become a major calamity. The first Hancock Rationing Board met on January 5, 1942, and included Dr. C.M. Gibbs, Lattie Hanes, John Souder, and Sam Hughes. The Boys Club collected 7,460 pounds of magazines and 7.650 pounds of paper in a scrap drive. The school children also collected milkweed pods for life preserves and in one drive collected 2,500 bags. Enough. I have told you everything that I know and some things I don't. Talk to me at Jskvarenina@hotmail.com, he Daily Reporter or on Facebook at Joe's Hancock Historic Corner.

2024-03-27

Brady Gang

By Joe Skvarenina

Clarence E. Watson served as Hancock County Sheriff for two terms 1934 and 1938. In 1936 he led the democrat ticket one month after the October 11, 1936 Brady Gang jail break.

The Brady gang was in the Hancock Jail under Sheriff's Watson custody on a change of venue from Marion county. They were awaiting trial for the murder of a police officers and perhaps others. The Brady gang was notorious, and some claimed more dangerous than the Dillinger gang.

The break happened on Sunday morning. It was Sheriff Watson's custom to do the housekeeping of the jail cell. Watson had emptied the paper baskets from the cell, and he had opened the heavy door to put the baskets back in the cell. When he did that gang members Brady, Shafer and Dahlhoffer were eating breakfast with their back to the door. When Watson opened the door, Brady jumped up with a yell and threw himself into the door opening. Watson knocked him back into the cell and stepped inside to close the door behind him to keep them from escaping. At this point the other two convicts joined Brady. after some investigation it was later learned that the gang had succeeded in breaking a piece of iron from the cell and had covered it with a T shirt. Brady had struck Sheriff Watson on the head with the weapon when Brady and Sheriff were fighting to gain control of it. The other two convicts were doing what they could to prevent Watson from winning the struggle. Watson's sister, Edna Tinney, who was doing the cooking and the housekeeping, ran to Watson's office to get his revolver. She had just succeeded in opening the drawer of Watson's desk where he kept the revolver, and just got ahold of it when Dahlhoffer, who had followed her, threw her out of the way and took the gun. So as Watson and Brady were fighting down the hallway over the iron bar, Dahlhoffer came along and pistol-whipped Sheriff Watson. Watson and Brady fought down the hallway, rolled down the front steps, and ended up with Sheriff Watson sitting on him and hanging on to the iron bar in the street in front of the jail. At that time Mr. and Mrs. Edgar Ridlen, owner of the Columbia Barber Shop, now the current site of the Greenfield Bank, drove by and saw the fight. He stopped to assist Sheriff Watson and he succeeded in knocking the gun out of Dahlhoffer's hand but unfortunately it landed near convict who picked it up again. After a struggle he shot at Ridlen, and the bullet went through his jacket lapel. There was another pistol whipping with the butt of the gun and the Sheriff was knocked unconscious for a short time. The gang escaped in Ridlen's car. After Sheriff Watson gained consciousness, he got up to the front door of the jail and told his wife to call the State Police.

The Brady Gang was apprehended in Bangor Maine. Brady and Shafer were shot to death attempting to escape arrest. Dahlhoffer was arrested and flown back to Indiana; tried, found guilty and was electrocuted. It took almost a full year after the Greenfield escape to bring the Brady Gang to justice. The jail all this happened was the current prosecutor's office

The Brady Gang were bank robbers and robbed bank around here and one or two in Ohio. One of the banks the Gang robbed was in Carthage, Indiana.

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2024-03-20

Call the Police

By Joe Skvarenina

The City of Greenfield was incorporated as a town in 1850 and incorporated as a City in 1876. I don't believe the Police Department was established until 1926 and the first Police Chief was John Francis Mulvihill who served as Police Chief from 1926 to 1928. Prior to 1926 Law Enforcement in Greenfield was a Town Marshall system with the first elected Town Marshall being N.P. Howard. The town Marshall was either elected or appointed. Up through the 1960s the Greenfield Police Department was indeed responsible for animal control and carried snares in the Police cars. The animal shelter was an old barn located on the hill just west of where the Fraternal Order of Police Lodge now sets. The Police Department has had four (4) Police Stations, the first being in the North West Corner of the County Court House, the second was in the newly constructed City Hall located at 110 South State Street, and had offices in the North east corner of City Hall, the third was at 23 West South Street, the fourth was when in 1977 the current Police Station was built at 116 South State Street where the Department is currently located.

John Mulvihill was Sheriff in 1919 and he arrested man from Indianapolis named Higgins who was smuggling a load of whiskey through Hancock County near Boyd Schoolhouse. Purchased at Cincinnati at a cost of \$1,102, the whiskey was said to be a typical weekly load. Also, mayor Ora Myers and Deputy Comstock arrested Homer and Moody Bridgewater for bootlegging. Whiskey was concealed in a corn crib. Mulvihill later became the Justice of Peace. The Mulvihill House is a big yellow house on Main Street with a small office area in the front from which the Justice Peace presided.

John Francis Mulvihill serves as Chief of Police for 1926-1928. Mulvihill also served three terms also as the Hancock County Sheriff 1917, 1919, 1921 and until 1922.

Enough. I have told you everything that I know and something's I don't. Talk to me at the jskvarenina@hotmail.com, the Daily Reporter or on Facebook at Joe's Historic Corner.

2024-03-13

Maxwell

By Joe Skvarenina

At one time Maxwell was called Junction. The old inner urban depot is still there. The current post office building was at one time a tavern, drug store and church. There was a hitching post out front. A chain factory was across the street and by quitting time the tavern was full. Maxwell was known as a rowdy town. In 1902 a sawmill was established at Maxwell by Richard Hagan and Curtis and later owned by W.S. Gant, Coffin & Company, F.J Wickers and Fremont Gant. The boiler in this mill exploded on the afternoon of September 15, 1902, instantly killing Thomas Sitton and William Bailey, and severely injuring Walter Cooper, Roy Sutton and Fremont Gant. The force of the explosion was terrific and produced a shock that was felt for miles around the mill. The first mill stood north of town but was later moved west of town and north of the tracks where the explosion occurred. Also, in 1902 a tornado hit the town and flattened the lumber yard and many homes. In 1946 Maxwell was shaken by a church fire and a school fire in 1955. Stivers Restaurant was in Maxwell 1953-1954. In the 1960's it was known as the Kissing Cousins Restaurant. Today, it is Mom and Pop's and owned by Debbie & Mark Elsbury who bought it in 2021.

On August 1, 1955, Eden and Maxwell Schools were consolidated and Hancock Central School began operation in September. The upper six grades occupied a building in Maxwell and the elementary grades were in the Eden building. If you go to the Eden building today, you will find the cornerstone and the stone from the front entrance on a hill in the parking area.

Raleigh Sitton from Maxwell was Hancock County Recorder from 1898 to 1911. John H. Carlton, a democrat, was Sheriff for four years from 1905-1909. He lived in Greenfield while serving as Sheriff but moved to Maxwell in 1909. At that time, he went into the grain and elevator business with Frank Brandenburg.

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2024-03-06

The White Family

By Joe Skvarenina

In 1997 Gas America President Richard White suffered a heart attack. He dies after heart transplant surgery on November 22, 1998. In addition to GasAmerica he was the secretary of White's Family Farms and a board member for Transport America, member of Indiana Ohio Marketing and Ohio Petroleum Marketers. Richard was also a member of the Shirley Wilkinson United Methodist Church and the Shirley Lions Club. He was survived by his wife Judith Alford White of 32 years and 2 children. When asked about her father Stephanie says, "My Dad, although not a college graduate had a very natural knack for business and was very intelligent. He was also in general a very likable, charismatic guy. He enjoyed fishing and golf and had lots of friends. He also loved to try new hobbies like making ketchup from scratch or chopping his own wood. I remember him working a lot while we were growing up until his heart attack when Keith and I were teenagers. He settled down a little after that and took better care of himself, but still always worked. He loved the company and his family. He was calm and kind. He loved to joke around and tease my mother. He treated his employees like family, and we were taught to respect them and expected to work hard. He was a good leader and members of his team were very loyal to him. He wasn't one to over flatter you so when he told you something good it really meant something. He was a good man." Richard's wife, Judith Alford White graduated from Wilkinson High School in 1963 as Salutatorian of her class and then went on to earn her R.N. license from the Methodist School of Nursing in 1966. After a long career in nursing, Judy became Chairwoman of the Board for GasAmerica Services in 1999. Judy founded the GasAmerica Charitable Foundation which has helped to raise funds for scholarships and many other charities over the years. Judith Elaine (Allford) White-Turner, Age 67, passed away at her home in Knightstown on Feb. 28, 2012. Born 1945 in Madison County, Indiana, Judy was a lifetime member of the Shirley Wilkinson United Methodist Church. Her parents were Marion & Edith Allford. The Alford family had settled in Eden, Green Township by 1830. There were many descendants of the Alford family, some still living in Hancock County. Hancock County also has Alford Road. When asked to describe her mother daughter Stephanie tells us, "My mother was a nurse and the main caretaker in the home. She was almost always sweet and patient so when she did lose her temper you would listen. She did not judge others and was a great listener. As a kid all my friends liked to hang out at my house and would often confide in or get advice from my mother. She was an amazing interior decorator, and it would be normal to come home and find our house completely rearranged every month or so. She was loyal and had many long-term friends. She put others first and took excellent care of all of us. She worked but always managed to make sure we had snacks and meals ready and never missed school events. She juggled a lot of needs very well. She was also very smart – salutatorian of her class. In a very male dominated family, she encouraged me greatly as a woman to do anything I set my mind to. She was also funny and liked to joke around – or others liked to tease her. Excellent and devoted grandmother and always made time for all of us. Loved Christmas and always made sure we had family holidays and get togethers. She was classy and had a great sense of style. Went on to do many charitable things after Dad passed in

addition to opening her own business, Top Hat Antiques in Knightstown. Are you an Alford let me hear from you.

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2024-02-28

Shirley

By Joe Skvarenina

I like to go out and look at history. Have you ever done it? One of the best places to go is Shirley Indiana. Author Thomas Schlereth gives interesting insight into the study of local history which he labels landscape history. As a matter of explanation, Schlereth defines archaeology as the work of researchers "who usually excavate the material remains of past cultures and through such evidence, attempt to recreate the history of man from the earliest past and to determine the nature of cultural systems at different times and places around the world." Schlereth goes on to tell us, "above ground archaeologists, unlike their below ground colleagues, dig into the past but usually on the surface ; they examine what they find before it is buried by time and chance. Above ground archaeologists can be called landscape historians. Landscape historians are intent at looking at objects, be they pot chards or service stations with an intense symptomatic and precise scrutiny that ultimately yields specific cultural information from single artifacts as well as braided cultural patterns." But like tree rings, the evidence of the past comes easily enough to handle but we need to see it, read it and explain it before it can be used as a story- a narrative tradition of history. I do believe that Shirley is a good example of landscape history and a great place for the local historian to begin to practice their craft..

For example, the discovery of natural gas in Shirley offered as a inducement to factories and as a result many factories moved to the town in the 1890's and the early 1900's. In fact, in 1910 Shirley had a population of 1519. In 1897 the Chemical Works came to Shirley. the Indiana Bottle in 1899. The Banner Glass company in 1900, the Hosek Brothers Lamp Factory in 1902, the Baker Glass Company in 1902-03, the Shirley Radiator and Foundry Company 1901, and the Shirley Creosote Company had all operated in Shirley. At one time along Route 234 you could see concrete foundations of the factory that have been turned into a foundation for a barn. Did you know that the oldest church in town is the Shirley Methodist Church organized in 1895. The Shirley School in Henry County was constructed in 1921-2 and it was used for 10 years before the students were transferred to Kennard. In 1838 the first log school on the Hancock County side was built on Edward Beeson Farm. In 1840 a frame school was built on the same lot. In 1893 it was blown down by a storm. It was replaced by another building the next year. A four-room schoolhouse was built in Shirley in 1900. This building burned in 1907. In 1908 another building was built. all eight grades were taught there until 1936. At this point the eighth grade was consolidated with Wilkinson and the first six grades continued to be taught at Shirley until 1959. At this point Shirley and Wilkinson Schools were consolidated. after that the first three grades were taught at Shirley until consolidation.

Early in the fall of 1902 the Mother of God Catholic church was established on the south edge of town. In 1903 the church had a membership of 130. In 1907 the church was closed, and the beautiful stained-glass windows, contents and bell was sent to St. Ann's at Mars Hill in Indianapolis and St. Rose in Knightstown.

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2024-02-21

Elma Toms and the Franchise League

By Joe Skvarenina

The League of Women Voters' of Hancock County web site and Linda Dunn shares with us the story of Margaret "Elma Powers Toms (1 Oct 1875 - 8 Jan 1958)." Margaret 'Elma' Powers Toms was a member when the Franchise League in Greenfield first formed, and she was devoted to progressive efforts. She was state chairman for the Federation of Clubs sale of goods produced by the Board of industrial Aid for the Blind and was a member of the Woman's Department Club. She was also a member of the Hancock County Garden Club, Hesperian Literary Club, Monday Study Club, Nora Hicks Club, W.C.T.U., Miriam Chapter No. 64, Order of Eastern Star, and others too numerous to list. Additionally, she chaired many committees and was instrumental in numerous ways, both large and small of making the world a better place for those who followed her...Margaret Elma Powers was the daughter of William H. and Catherine (Haskett) Powers, both of whom arrived in Hancock county as children in the mid 1800s. They were members of the Westland Friends Church and Catherine was a proud member of the W.C.T.U. Elma attended Terre Haute State Normal College and taught in the Blue River township schools at the age of 16. She married Edgar V. Toms 18 Mar 1896, as verified by the Westland Monthly Meeting Records, and they had one son, William Lowell Toms, who became a newspaper reporter in Indianapolis best known for his outdoors columns under the byline of "Tubby Toms". Ed was the son of William and Charity B. Toms. William had been born in Perquimans Co, NC 23 Jan 1838 and had a birthright certificate from the Dublin Monthly Meeting 4-28-1883. Charity was born in Hancock County, the daughter of Joseph and Elizabeth E. (Hill) Binford. Edgar V. was born in Fayette County, 19 Jun 1838 and attended Earlham College 1885-1886. Edgar's father, William Toms, was a Republican Trustee for Blue-river Township in 1888 and he was a Director for the Capital State Bank of Greenfield. In preparation for his marriage, Ed had acquired material to erect a new house on his farm, which was south-east of town and Elma presumably lived there." Now here is the rest of the story

Several years ago, I met Tom Lund at the Riley Memorial Association in Indianapolis and discovered that Lund's great geat aunt was Elma Toms. Elma's son William Lowell "Tubby" was the founder of Nameless Creek Youth Camp. Mr. Lund told, "It's nice know that the camp that my great-uncle helped start up is still going strong after so many years. Yes, William Lowell "Tubby" Toms was my great-uncle, and the cabin that the Lee family owns, right next door, used to belong to my late Mom as 'Tubby' had left it to her. My family subsequently sold it much to my chagrin in the early 1970's when I was serving on active duty in the United States Navy as a very young kid. When I was honorably discharged from the Navy, I wanted to live in it but, unfortunately, it didn't work out that way.

While I do remember Tubby quite well, his wife, my great-aunt Adeline Toms, passed away from a heart attack at the age of 50 in 1957 when I was not quite 4 years old so my personal memories of her are almost non-existent, minus all the stories my late Mom told me about her. Adeline was an aviatrix, a WASP in World War II, and a Colonel in the Indiana Civil Air Patrol. Being an aviation fanatic myself, I wish she could have stuck around a little longer so she

could have been my flight instructor. I really missed out on getting to know her as I got to know Tubby as a kid and as a teenager."

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2024-02-14

Dye Cemetery

By Joe Skvarenina

Wayne Sharp writes, "In and around 1960, as a young boy, I used to play in Sugar Creek Park (now defunct) and the surrounding area. One summer day I noticed a very small settlers cemetery just across the railroad bridge just east of Sugar Creek... There were six grave markers above the plots dating from 1868 to 1873. I forgot about the six grave plots for many years.

Forward 60 years after I drove by the Philadelphia Cemetery; I noticed the old park was gone and the old Penn Central rail tracks were no longer there as well. Having a fairly good memory I decided to go down the one lane road just east of Sugar Creek and south of U.S. 40 and see if the small cemetery was still there? Shortly thereafter, I noticed what appeared to be a raised area in the road that I realized was the embankment for the old railroad. The entire area was presently very thick foliage and there was no sign of any grave plots. Being dressed for the occasion, I worked my way, at times on my hands and knees, through the vines, trees, thorn bushes and could see only a few feet in front of me. It was 98 degrees and at 72 was probably too old and foolish to be crawling around in the heat and jungle-like conditions. With sweat getting into my eyes and insects attacking me, I gave up and started to crawl out. I got caught in a tricky vine that was not willing to let me go. As I freed myself from my predicament, I turned my freed body partially around to leave when I came face to face with the small grave marker of Cordelia Dye age 11. I was able to push through and eventually located five more markers. The Dye Cemetery was still there! Six lost graves, the exact location of which was forgotten for at least 30 years. Their graves had been neglected and their exact location no longer was unknown. They were Elmer Dobins age 3, Clementine Dye age 17, Cordelia Dye age 11 and Georgie Dye age 1 along with two infants all buried side by side.

In October, I returned with my family members to clear out the foliage and repair the grave markers. In the Spring of 2024, a historical marker will be added. In 1963, I left Hancock County and went on with my life. The Dye children remained behind. Let us keep the children in our thoughts, never to be forgotten again in the Dye Cemetery plots." Thanks Wayne.

Enough. I have told you everything that I know and some things I don't. Talk to me at jskvarenina@hotmail.com, the Daily Reporter or on Facebook at Joe's Historic Corner.

2024-02-07

Irvin Hunt

By Joe Skvarenina

Rich Horton in examining an old photo discovers a house near the Riley Park Well House and wonders if anyone know about it.

The Richman History of Hancock County Indiana tells us that just east of Swope Street stood the Morris Lineback property. In those days this was the last house in the corporate limits. The next home was on the north side of the National Road east of the Brandywine which was spanned by a covered bridge. This house stood about a quarter of a mile north of the bridge was the home of Irvin Hunt the first (African American) in Greenfield. At Mr. Hunt's home was the location of one of the best springs known in the community for a number of years. In fact, the spring was named Irvin spring by James Whitcomb Riley. In 1931 the Greenfield Federation of Women's Clubs constructed a well house and rock garden at the site of the Irving cabin. The well house and fountain were erected with the funds contributed by different clubs. The project committee for this endeavor included Miss Vernie Baldwin as Chairman, Mrs. Bruce Goble, Mrs. Bert Orr, Mrs. O.P. Eastes and Miss Kathryn Curry. The well house still in existence today was constructed of cracked stone and a red tile roof.

In 1915, Mr. Hunt was one of the 21 members of the reorganized 7th Day Adventist Church in Greenfield which in those days had a school with 10 pupils. Irvin would tell Riley and his friends ghost stories when they visited. I am sure that Hunt added a lot of local color to Riley's poetry.

Enough. I have told you everything that I know and some things I don't. Talk to me at jskvarenina@hotmail.com, the Daily Reporter or on Facebook at Joe's Hancock Historic Corner.

2024-01-31

School Number 11

By Joe Skvarenina

Heather VanDyke writes "Several people have pointed me in your direction for information. I work for the county Auditor in the map room. I'm researching a half-acre of land labeled School No 11 with no known owner. The parcel is 30-07-18-100-007.003-008. Apparently, it was given a parcel in 2010 but no one has claimed it. Do you have any info on a school on E 400 N? Ideally I'd like to find a deed or record of a deeded owner."

I am going to Greg Murphy to help get an answer. He writes "Regarding School #11, I referred to friends of mine, Phil and Sharon Hunt, who live in 400N. They happened to have an old map of Hancock County, they told me according to the map, School 11 is NOT EAST of state road 9, it is WEST of state road 9. School 11 was located West of State Rd. 9 on the corner of 400N and 50E. Schools 4, 6 & 7 are located on 400N EAST of State Rd. 9."

The last one room, schoolhouse in Hancock County was the Ada New School in east Greenfield. It was abandoned in 1947. In 1959 the Indiana School Organization Act required all districts have 1000 students. Thus, the death of the one room school district. A committee of local citizens drew the lines. Jackson, Brown and Blue River Townships were in the Eastern District; Green and Center Townships were in the Greenfield Central District. Sugar Creek and Brandywine were in the Southern Hancock School Corporation. Buck Creek and Vernon were in the Mount Vernon School system.

It is interesting to note that Hancock County voted against free schools in 1848 and 1849. But they did vote for the 1851 Indiana Constitution which had free public schools provisions in it. It is also interesting to note in 1915 there were 30 one room school houses still in operation. By that time Blue River Township was the only township to consolidate their schools.

Enough. I have told you everything that I know and some things I don't. Talk to me at jskvarenina@hotmail.com or the Daily Reporter.

2024-01-24

More on Jonathan Evans

By Joe Skvarenina

New Palestine was laid out on October 1, 1838, by Jonathan Evans six months after the town of Philadelphia was laid out. The town was Incorporated in 1871 and had also been known as Sugar Creek and Palestine. The early 1900's Lewis Schreiber opened the Ye Auto Shop restaurant in the west parlor of their home. He operated the restaurant until he retired in 1944, after which Henry Wood ran the restaurant for a short time. In addition, circa 1946 Dick and Bonnie Scott decide to open Bonnie Restaurant on the site of Jonathan Evan's home. Many notables dine at this establishment including Jim Reeves, Fabian, Wendell Willkie and Homer Capehart. I remember Bonnie's for her banana cream pie. The first New Palestine Bank opened in August 1892 in the rear of the brick standing on the northeast corner of Main and Bittner Streets. In 1893 it moved to Main Street where the Masonic lodge is now located. this bank prospered but closed in 1895 due the withdrawal of the owners which was common in those days. In 1897 New Palestine Bank opened for business on the southeast corner of Main and Bittner Streets. A drug store was in the west half of the building and the bank in the east half. In 1925 the Greenfield daily Reporter carried an article concerning a robbery. Several men from New Palestine apprehended the suspects at Gem and called Sheriff Comstock to come and arrest them. Apparently, several iron bars over the rear window of the bank had been sawed through and tracks in the snow were made by the rubber boots of one of the suspects. No mention was ever made of the amount of money taken. In 1956 the Bank moved on the corner of Bittner and Walnut Streets behind the Shell. In 1961 the Bank was robbed of \$5,815 by gunman with a .22 caliber pistol. This occurred in the middle of winter and travel was difficult and no suspects were found.

The Old New Palestine High School was built in 1919 and was recently torn down. I don't believe the Dragons and the Klan story. It is probably an urban myth.

Enough. I have told you everything that I know and some things I don't. Talk to me at the jskvarenina@hotmail.com or the Daily Reporter.

2024-01-17

Jonathan Evans

By Joe Skvarenina

Linda Chambers writes, "We know that Jonathan Evans platted New Palestine in 1838 and opened a store. Do we know much more about this Jonathan Evans? Is he the brother of Ursula (Evans) Snodgrass and the son of Walter Evans and Ursula (Herriott) Evans? Is he buried in the New Palestine area?"

The only Jonathan Evans I have found in a cemetery in the area is the Jonathan Evans in Crownland Cemetery in Noblesville, Hamilton County, Indiana. The Find A Grave information says he was born 11/17/1799 in Nicholas County, Kentucky, and died 5/19/1876 in Noblesville. That's probably Ursula's Brother (Find A Grave says he is) however I'm surprised he didn't stay in the New Palestine area. Ursula (Evans) Snodgrass and Benjamin Snodgrass are my Great-Great-Great-Grandparents; I'm trying to fill in family information." For these types of questions I always rely upon Greg Murphy, an expert genealogist. He tells, "I searched Jonathan Evans on Ancestry.com and copied the 1850 Hancock Co., Indiana Census, also the 1860 & 1870 Hamilton Co., Indiana Census. I also copied historical information I found in searching Jonathan Evans in google.

The following is what I found and believe is accurate.

Jonathan Evans and his family moved from Hancock County to Hamilton County sometime between 1850 and 1860. When comparing the census records, they confirm this is the same Jonathan Evans who platted New Palestine. In my opinion, and after reviewing other Ancestry documentation, I believe the Jonathan Evans memorial on F.A.G. is accurate. Jonathan Evans is the brother of Ursula EVANS Snodgrass, he is the son of Walter and Ursula HERRIOTT Evans and Jonathan is buried at Crownland Cemetery, Noblesville, Hamilton County, Indiana. The short biography of Walter Evans, Jonathan's father, confirms that the family migrated from Maryland and indeed, settled in Nicholas County, Kentucky, where Jonathan Evans was born. Walter Evans and family later moved and lived in Harrison County, Kentucky. In my experience with F.A.G. memorials, there are sometimes questions regarding information. It is always best to confirm information using Ancestry or Courthouse records." Thanks, Greg. Enough. We have told you everything that we know and some things we don't. Talk to me at jskvarenina@hotmail.com or the Daily Reporter.

2024-01-10

Hospital Property

By Joe Skvarenina

In his autobiography George Knox looks back at life in early Greenfield. Knox became a successful barber in the Gooding Tavern Building, now the Greenfield City Hall. Knox was a civil war veteran, a former slave and later an influential black newspaper editor. Knox was born in Tennessee. In 1863 he crossed to the Union lines to become a mule driver and eventually he worked his way up to published of the Recorder newspaper. In 1865 he opened his barber shop. He made friends with Riley who painted the shaving mugs in his shop. Knox described Greenfield as a place where "prejudice was very high". But still Knox and his fellow black citizens made a fulfilling life for themselves in Greenfield in spite of it. They established such organizations such as a literary club, debate society, a church, and a school. They also held camp meetings at Boyd's Grove, now the hospital property, for both races. There was a racetrack at the Boyd's when it housed the fair.. There are no racetracks in Hancock County now. But we do have people interested in racing like Mark Dinsmore and Steve Long who is the CEO at the hospital. Steve tells us, "Racing career – not sure “career” is the right word, though I do consider racing and working on cars my “avocation” (healthcare is my vocation). It all began before I was born... It was May of 1966 and my dad and uncle flat-towed their late 50's drag car behind the family station wagon from Cedar Rapids, Iowa to Cordova, Illinois late one Saturday afternoon. They raced the car that evening (and broke) but were too exhausted to drive back since they stayed up all night on Friday to get the car ready, so my mom, eight months pregnant with me, drove the wagon home, towing the race car while the guys slept in the back seat! My mom believes hearing the thunder of the drag cars in-utero doomed me from the beginning! I grew up working on cars with my dad and caught the fever in my teenage years with the purchase of my first car in 1979 (yes, I was 13) – a '66 Camaro that my dad and I turned into a hot rod. My dad built a drag car at that time (1970 Chevelle) and I have many fond memories of time spent at the racetrack with that car in northern Indiana. As the years went by, we moved around quite a bit and my dad raced off and on while I got into the hot rod scene. The first drag car I drove was a 1966 Chevy II (that year seems to come up a lot), then we moved to a rear engine dragster. In hindsight, my dad was very gracious to vacate the driver's seat since he was only in his late 30's (though I, of course, thought he was ancient) and I drove through late high school and into college. Since we did all our own fabrication work, we had very nice race cars, but we didn't have much money for engines, so the racing was intermittent as funds allowed. About that time, I finished college and was recruited to run hospitals in the Air Force where I met my wife and began a family. With four kids and a career, cars went on the back burner for quite a while, though my dad and I dabbled in racing together as time permitted. It wasn't until moving to Greenfield that the kids were old enough and racing activities near enough (Indy is the racing capitol of the world after all) to begin to fulfill my lifelong dream of racing more frequently. Currently we are competing in the Nostalgia Drag Racing League (NDRL) in the Pro 7.50 class. Our car runs the quarter mile in just over seven seconds and achieves a top speed between 180 and 190 mph. Our goal is to have fun, be competitive, and be unique. We are chasing the dream!" Thanks Steve.

Enough I have told you everything that now I know and some things I don't. Talk to me at the jskvarenina@hotmail.com or the Daily Reporter.

2024-01-03

Barton Reeves Pogue

By Joe Skvarenina

The poet Barton Rees Pogue grew up in a house on North Spring Street which was once lived in by former Mayor Pat Elmore in Greenfield. Pogue a poet who followed in the footsteps of James Whitcomb Riley. He quit High School as a sophomore to become a printer clerk in Mitchell's shop in Greenfield where his first book was published. In 1917 he won first prize in the National Intercollegiate Prohibition Oratorical contest. He became famous in the 1920's for broadcasting his poems for 12 years on Station WLW in Cincinnati. He taught speech at Taylor University. He wrote for the Indiana's Farmers Guide, Newspaper Syndicate, the Indianapolis Times, Good Housekeeping, and Ideals. He published six books. Author William Herschel, the same type of writer, declared that Pogue, "depicts the Hoosier types with real skills." It is interesting to note that I found one of Pogue's books in a used book shop formerly on Washington Street and it was autographed.

Gary Wright shares with us one of Pogue's books which was illustrated by Will Vawter. John William Vawter was born in West Virginia in 1870 and moved with his family to Greenfield in 1880. "Will" as he was called worked as an illustrator for the Hancock County Democrat and the Indianapolis Sentinel. In November 1891 he began illustrating for the Indianapolis News.

In 1893 his big break came when the Indianapolis Journal asked him to illustrate in a special edition a full-page poem by James Whitcomb Riley. This special edition was produced to coincide with a large national gathering of the GAR (Grand Army of the Republic) The newspaper prominently featured Vawter's illustrations of the poem, "Amazindy: A Born Soldier and Hero" on September 5, 1893.

By the time Vawter started illustrations of Riley Poems, the Hoosier poet received national renown. Riley was known for using the Hoosier dialect to create poems with the spirit of the Hoosier soil. Vawter also honed his artistic skills by observing life around him. The Riley Vawter paring initiated by the Indianapolis Journal initiated a long creative partnership. In 1898 Bowen Merrill reissued a collection of Riley Poems "Riley Child Rhymes and Vawter's illustrations were heavily featured in the book.

In an interview with the Indianapolis News Riley said, "It was very gratifying to find an artist who is unconsciously aware of the situation and who understands his own intimate surroundings. Will Vawter is such an artist. There is no vagueness in his interpretations of the poems in this book. He is a Greenfield boy and native. As an artist he depicts people in no patronizing way...They are taken in a realistic spirit. He is of them." Does anyone have any of the Pogue works illustrated by Vawter? I would like to see one.

Enough. I have told you everything that I know and some I don't. Talk to me at jskvarenina@hotmail.com or the Daily Reporter

2023-12-27

Early Days in Blue River

By Joe Skvarenina

I had a gentleman ask me to write about the history of Blue River Township at the Farmers Market. So here you go. According to the Binford History Edith and Harmon Warrum came into Blue River Township in 1822. Son Noble Warrum was four years old. When the family first came it was a dense wilderness for miles. There was no sound save the rustling of leaves and the angry voice of storm clouds. No music broke the stillness of the summer air save the buzzing of the mosquitoes or the ravenous wolves. If the railroads had passed through the country the pioneers probably would have considered it haunted. The nearest neighbors were about eight distance living in Brandywine Township. Eventually our families would come to the immediate area.

Cabins were put up in almost every direction. According to Warrum, "The pioneer cabin was cheaply made and easily constructed. Ours was built of round logs notched to lay closely together, the roof was four foot clapboards weighed down by poles laid across the course of the boards...Then there was what was termed the 'eaves bearer,' a log laying parallel with ends of the cabin and protecting about eighteen inches over the wall; a good splitting stick was selected, split through the center, placed on the ends of the eaves bearer and notched for the roof boards to butt against; this was called the butting pole; a door was sawed out and the logs used as steps; then a window was cut, a single opening..." A window was made," by placing sticks across as a framework on which a piece of grease newspaper was placed. A chimney was built of sticks and mud and was called 'cat and clay chimney.' Prior to completing the cabin, the families were living with all their household goods in a hollow sycamore tree." Warrum goes on to tell, " After moving into our new house, we furnished it with a couple of one-legged bedsteads produced by my father's own hand... Then the doors were puncheons pinned together... the hinges were of wood and the door catch or trigger when shut was opened outside by pulling a string...To lock the door you would pull the string on the inside." Hence the expression 'the latch string hangs out.' Warrum adds," Almost every pioneer who attended church came with a gun on his shoulder and if a deer or wolf crossed the track, he killed it...Father thought a great deal about his dogs...One was bitten by rattlesnake and died. It was uncommon thing to kill from 20-25 black rattlesnakes in a day" in Blue River Township.

Some pioneers claimed their land by "Tomahawk Right". It consisted of deadening a few trees near a spring and mark the bark of one with the initials of the settler.

Enough. I have told you everything that I know and some things I don't. Talk to me at Jskvarenina@hotmail.com the Daily Reporter.

2023-12-20

Superstitions

By Joe Skvarenina

What do you know about pioneer superstitions in Hancock county which probably were the same all over the state. Indiana was admitted to the Union in 1816 but it was still a raw frontier. These observations were originally recorded by Rev. Edward Muir a Methodist minister in Spencer Indiana. According to Muir, "To the pioneer in Lincoln's day the carrying of an edged tool, such as a hoe or ax, through the hose was an omen of bad luck, foretelling the death of a family member within that period... The plaintiff howling of a dog meant that morrow would tell of death somewhere. The crossing of the hunters path by a dog meant bad luck unless the hunter locked his little finger until the dog was out of sight; or better still if he returned to the point of starting and began his journey anew, all ill fortune of bad luck occasioned by the bad start would be reckoned against him...Friday was a bad day in the calendar to be avoided anything new such as plowing , sowing or reaping in the fields, or making of a garment unless the labor could be completed during the day. A bird alighting on the widow or coming into the house was a sure sign of sorrow. All planting, sowing, fencing and preparation for the same was to be governed by certain signs of the moon. Plants such as potatoes, maturing beneath the surface of the soil must be planted in the dark of the moon. And in like manner tomatoes and beans must be planted during the light of the moon. "Do you know of any others?

My grandmother hung garlic by the back door. My dad always carried buckeyes in his pocket. We always planted our peas by moonlight.

One last thing, one of the Indiana's least explored areas of antebellum history is that of the state's financial institutions and their currency issues. Prior to the Civil War a wide range of firms included two state banks, a private multi-branch statewide bank, state chartered and unregulated banks as well as insurance companies, railroads and others issued bank notes of varying reliability. In fact, there were 455 issuers of 2800 bank notes and scrip. A new book by Wendell Wolka "A History of Indiana Obsolete Bank Notes and Scrip" is now available. Contact pruduenut@aol.com for further details.

Enough. I have told you everything that I know and some things I don't. Talk to me at jskvarenina@hotmail.com or the Daily Reporter.

2023-12-08

Center Township

By Joe Skvarenina

I believe the first white settlers entered Hancock County in 1818. It was vast wilderness in which there were numerous Indians. The first schoolhouse was a log cabin built in Blue River Township about 1823. In 1824 Joshua Wilson built the first grist mill in Blue River Township. The first blacksmith was Thomas Phillips who had his shop in 1822 on the Blue River. The first tavern was erected near Greenfield in 1826. The first store in the county was owned by Elijah Tyner, also on the Blue River. The first road into the county was the Napoleon Trace which is probably 700 east. Hancock County was cut off from Madison County in 1828 and named for John Hancock. President of the Convention was adopted the Declaration of Independence. During the first presidential election in 1828 101 people voted and the county population was probably 400 individuals. Today the population is 28,214. Hancock County's first exports were ginseng, venison, furs and tow linen. The Blue River is the largest stream in the county, and it was a good mill stream for the pioneers. The three original townships of the county were Blue River, Brandywine, and Sugar Creek which were organized in 1828.

The first land entry in Center Township was made by Platt Montgomery in 1821. The township was wilderness and pioneers had to clear land, build log houses and plant crops. When John and Sarah Martin settled in Section 10 in Center Township, they all had twelve dollars and six children. The oldest church still in existence was Curry's Christian founded in 1840. The Center township was organized in May of 1831; Township law was not enacted until the 1859 election that year. John Foster was the first Center Township Trustee which also served as the first sheriff and the first representative from Hancock County. In Census of 1910 Center Township had a population including the City of Greenfield of 6,400. Since 1853 the townships have kept its current boundaries however before the northern half was split into Union & Harrison townships. These townships disappeared. Back then the job of Township Trustee included what is now the duties of superintendent of the schools and the "Overseer of the Poor". Today the trustee still helps those who need assistance in one form or another. Center Township keeps up 9 township pioneer cemeteries. The current Center Township Trustee Thomas Lopez. He is the youngest trustee serving trustee both locally and in the state.

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2023-11-29

GAR Composites

By Joe Skvarenina

Rebecca Crowe writes, "I would like to find the photo composites of the Hancock County G.A.R. Posts. The Fortville G.A.R. composite is currently in the museum under the Soldiers' & Sailors' Monument in Indianapolis."

The Grand Army of the Republic was organized at Decatur Illinois April 6, 1866. it was for Civil War Veterans who wanted to ". Does anyone have photos of any of the p[htcontinue" the feelings of comradeship of the Civil War. Membership was limited to honorably discharged Union veterans. The community level organization was called a post which was included in a Department at the state or national levels. Indianapolis was chosen three times to host the National Encampments, 1866, 1881, and 1893, an honor no other city would be able to claim. The first GAR post in Hancock was chartered August 9, 1882, and was named the Samuel H. Dunbar Post situated in Greenfield. This post held its meetings at the GAR room in the courthouse. This would have been probably the third Hancock County Courthouse. The post was active until 1936 when the last old veteran, Samuel Shelby, answered the final roll call. In 1862 at the age of 18 Shelby enlisted Co. B Eight Regiment of Indiana volunteers and the Mississippi Marines called the Brown Water Navy.

Through the years there were six posts in Hancock County and named in honor of deceased veterans. Charlottesville Post # 545, active from 1889 to 1898; Fortville So D. Kempton Post #228, active from 1883 to 1930; Gem, William E. Hart Post #454, chartered 1886, no disband date given; the Greenfield Dunbar Post; New Palestine, Charles A. Kirkhoff Post #534 active 1888-1907; and Willow Branch, Lorenzo Post, #438 active from 1886-1893

A Women's Relief Corp was organized in 1871. The purpose of the Corps was to aid the GAR in all its undertakings; to perpetuate the memory of the patriotic dead; to aid Union soldiers, their widows, and orphans and to inculcate love of country to their children and the next generation. Does anyone have any photos of Hancock County GAR posts?

Enough. I have told you everything that I know and some things I don't. Talk to me at Jskvarenina@hotmail.com or the Daily Reporter.

2023-11-22

Daisy Barr

By Joe Skvarenina

David Pfaff writes, "I am currently reading "A Fever in the Heartland" by Timothy Egan. It's a treatment of the growth and fall of the KKK in Indiana during the 1920s. The author talked about the influence of Reverend Daisy Barr in growing the Klan among women in Indiana. I found a couple of related articles on Rev. Barr that mentions her connection to Greenfield. Can you shed any light on her time here?"

Yes, I can. Indiana Historian James Madison has written the seminal book on the Klu Klan called "The Klu Klux Klan, In The Heartland". Dr. Madison writes, "Our democracy demands we open all the pages of in the book of history." In doing this he examines many of the critical stories about the Klan in Indiana and the Midwest in the 1920's. Hancock County doesn't escape this examination of Klan members within the community, One such individual was Daisy Barr. Barr was a Friends preacher. In addition to Greenfield Barr served in congregations in Muncie, Lewisville, Fairmount and New Castle. She entered the Klan along with GOP politics in the early 1920's. She served as the first female Vice GOP Chair in Indiana. She was brought into the Klan by D.C. Stephenson. She was also active in the Women's Temperance Movement. She eventually went on to serve the national Klan movement. Barr told a group in Marion Indiana that if Christ were on the earth at the present time, he would have certainly joined the Klan. According to Madison's book, " Barr had an eye for the main chance when it came to fundraising- so much so that here enemies inside and outside the Klan accused her of keeping Klan collections for her own."...the anti-Klan editor of the Muncie Post-Democrat, was her must vicious enemy labeling her Daisy Doodle Barr." The Madison book is really worth a read.

Enough. I have told you everything that I know and some things I don't. Talk to me at jksvarenina@hotmail.com or the Daily Reporter.

2023-11-17

Columbia Hotel

By Joe Skvarenina

Lomie Yarwood wants to know about what was located at the Christian Church parking lot at one time. The Columbia Hotel was built on East Main Street in Greenfield in 1895. Clint Parker was the prime mover in building the establishment. According to an ad in the Daily Reporter there were three floors with fifty rooms. The first floor given over to a large dining room, kitchen, and bar. There was a large grand staircase and a up and down elevator. The third floor had three large showrooms where salesman displayed their merchandise. Mr. and Mrs. Bragg were the first managers. Their daughter Ora Bagg was the salesperson at the J. Ward Walker store. She lived in the hotel until she was married. Later the hotel's name was changed to the James Whitcomb Riley. The Hotel was famous for its chicken dinners. In 1922 a 3-gallon still and other times for making liquor was confiscated by Federal Officers at the Columbia. The proprietor at the time was David Hull. He was fined a \$175 and costs.

In the 1950's it came upon hard times. Managers at the time dumped the ashes for the coal furnace in the basement which subsequently filled the basement. No one knew what to do with the ashes or the building. In 1965 it was torn down. Many Greenfield families had celebrations at the site. Today the location is an empty lot on the North side of Main Street and people park there to go to church.

Enough. I have told you everything that I know and some things I don't. Talk to me at jskvarenina@hotmail.com or the Daily Reporter.

2023-11-10

Annarino

By Joe Skvarenina

Do you remember Appledale Market? The old Appledale Market was located on the corner of US 40 and Meridian Road east of Greenfield. The name "Appledale" came about because of the 40 acres apple and peach orchard that existed when Route 40 was only two lanes. Before the land was purchased in 1939 by Mrs. Jacob Straffa it was known as Harmer's Orchard. It was operated by J.B. Harmers. Mrs. Straffa passed to her daughter, Mrs. Anthony Annarino. Mrs. Annarino, with her late husband and four children, operated the market for a number of years. The original market structure was destroyed by fire in the 1940's. Mr. and Mrs. Lombardo also operated the market. For years a watermelon tank was still in the ground and had flowers growing in it. The tank is gone also, and Leo's is at the site. Diane Fiega an Annarino descendent, has a mystery she wants solved. It past seems that in back of the old farm, along Meridian Road, across from Liberty Shores there is an abandoned truck in a clump of trees. The truck seems quite old. Does anyone know the story behind this? Is there a mystery involved.

Mike Holzhausen writes. "Enjoyed your comments about the tomatoes in Hancock County. I worked in the Coddington factory during tomato season one summer. It was probably 1961 when I was still in high school at Mt. Comfort. It was in the building that is now Monroe Custom Bodies (MCB). The factory manager or foreman at that time was Maynard Brown. I remember that there was a tomato loading point, probably for other factories, on the northwest corner of Mt. Comfort Road (600) west and 200 N."

Don Freeman also called and said his father was a tomato farmer probably in Brown and Jackson Townships. He says that there were canning factories also in Carthage, Greenfield, Shirley, and two in Morristown. Tomatoes were an import an crop in Hancock County in the early 1930's until the 1970's

For many years the chief industry of Hancock County was agriculture and the small family farm. Myron E. Cromer was the county's first extension agent beginning i his work in 1918. At first hi office was at the top of the Hancock County Courthouse. Later after its completion the extension office it was moved to the Memorial Building. According to some Cromer introduced the soybean to Hancock County. He was also active in establishing the Hancock County Farm Bureau. The Richman History tells us in 1840 corn was the biggest crop followed by oats and wheat. In 1840 swine were the most important livestock followed by sheep and cattle which were soon tied for second place. Today the farms are larger, and the important crops are soybeans and corn followed by a distant wheat. Swine are still important for the county. In the 1920's mechanized farming took hold and the farmers became less dependent on horses. Today the farms are larger in the county.

Enough. I have told you everything that I know and some things I don't. Talk to meet at jskvarenina@hotmail.com or the Daily Reporter.

2023-11-03

Napoleon and Whetzel Trace

By Joe Skvarenina

Mary Greenan and others want to know where Napoleon Trace got its name. I do believe the Trace got its name from where it started in Napoleon Indiana. I can't say it is 100% but I came to the conclusion by doing newspaper research at the state library.

The 1818 New Purchase Treaty purchased much of central Indiana including Hancock county from the Delaware Indians. Settlers first came into Hancock County on Traces or buffalo paths. These Traces were widened and became the early roads. The Napoleon Trace followed the Nameless Creek beyond the Blue River according to some. I had folks show me the remaining areas in which the Trace can be still seen today. This area is near the old Gilboa cemetery in the location of the Hatfield homestead. It extended through Blue River, Jackson, and Green Townships crossing Blue River near Warrum's old home, and Sugar Creek near Squire Hatfield's, at a place known as "Stover Ford." Good old Russell Trees believed the northern section also went through Brown Township. The old roads in pioneer days were all mere paths that were blazed out through the thick timber and underbrush What do you know about the Napoleon Trace? Local Tom Van Duyn can tell you about walking the Napoleon Trace and believes he knows the location.

Did you know that Brandywine Township which was organized in 1828 at the time the Hancock County was established and was at one time the whole center third of the county? The Brandywine stream and township was named by Jacob Whetzel Indian scout and trader whose trace went through the township. If you go south on State Route 9 you will come across a historical sign in Shelby County which tells you about Whetzel Trace. It was a trail from Whitewater River in Laurel which terminated at the buffs of the White River in Morgan county. It was the first east-west road in central Indiana. Whetzel got the permission from Chief Anderson to build the trace on Delaware Indian land. It was completed in 1819. Whetzel and his son decided to settle at the terminus at Waverly. He died at the site in 1827. One of the mazing features of the Trace was that it traveled west on an angle of four degrees, the western point only five miles north of the eastern point, a remarkable achievement for a backwoods Indian fighter with no training in engineering.

Earlier in his life Jacob and his brother Lewis were captured by Mingo Indians but escaped in a few days. At the age of 16 Jacob and brother Lewis served as scouts for General St Clair in his campaign against Indian Villages in the Northwest Territory. He took part in the Battle of Tippecanoe. His accomplishments as an early pioneer earned him a place of honor in Indiana history.

Enough. I have told you everything that I know and some things I don't Talk to me at jskvarenina@hotmail.com or the Daily Reporter.

2023-10-27

Octagon House

By Joe Skvarenina

Cindi Atwell writes "I read your article about the Ross Reeves Octagon house and I remember seeing it when it was still out in the country before being moved. I moved outside of Wilkinson in 1979 and I met the original owner Hobart O'Kelly who told me some much history of the area. He was selling a book for some ladies in his church and I bought one because I was fascinated by the history. The title is Brown Township Through the years 1830-1976, written by Ethel and Victoria Harlan and 3 others. It is a fascinating account of all the small towns in this area. It was published by Brown Township Bi-Centennial Committee and printed by T.C. Graphics in Knightstown. I still have it because it's a great piece of history.

You also did a piece on cemeteries some time ago and I wanted to respond (old age makes me very slow to get things done) but I grew up in Fortville and there is a very old cemetery in the woods by Lick Creek just to the left of Gravel Lawn Cemetery. I would never know this was there, but I rode my horse through the creek and there were Indian mounds and very old markers for military. I would be surprised if there is anything, but a few markers left as that was in the early 60's but the markers were from the 1800's. And yes, we do have quicksand in Indiana because my horse and I got into that, and you don't forget that!"

Thanks Cindi. Is it possible that the cemetery it is located just inside Madison County? I couldn't find anything on it. were

I know that at one time there were Native American mounds in Hancock County and there is still some today. Early settlers in some cases would plow them under. I believe that the Hopewell and Adena cultures were the prime mound builders in Indiana and Ohio. Generally, four periods and traditions are recognized in prehistory or before the settlers. These periods include Paleo Indians, Archaic, Woodland and Late prehistoric periods The Woodland or Adena's existed from 1000 BC to 100 AD. For survival they depended on hunting, gathering, fishing and collecting. Eventually horticulture became a source of food with the three sisters of Native American agriculture maize (corn) beans and squash. Adena became representative or early Woodland tradition. These peoples build mounds for burial and maybe even territorial markers. Adena mounds were placed in upland locations. Adena mortuary rituals would include placing quantities of grave goods in the mounds. Examples would include chert blades, pipes, copper jewelry, worked bone shells and other items. Some mounds were effigy or zoomorphic. Some mounds represented snakes and were called snake mounds. I do believe that there is one of these in Hancock County. One caution it is illegal to disturb Indian Mounds.

Enough. I have told you everything that I know and some things I don't. Talk to me at jskvarenina@hotmail.com or the Daily Reporter

2023-10-20

Column Bridges

By Joe Skvarenina

Tony Dillon writes" I work with historic bridge preservation in Indiana. I was also an inspector on the 2006 rehab. of the Hays Bridge over Sugar Creek. During this time, I had the chance to do a little research on other bridges that once existed in the county. Of special interest was the Duncan Bridge, that like the Hays Bridge was designed by former Greenfield engineer Winfield Fries. The blueprints for this bridge are hanging in the Hancock County Highway Department. I believe it crossed Sugar Creek on County Road 200 West just NE of Philadelphia. If this is the correct location it was replaced in 1970. After a nearly 12-year absence I am once again looking for a photo of this bridge, but so far have had no luck. The design is very similar to the Hays Bridge, but the Duncan Bridge was somewhat longer and also was skewed... Something that was very uncommon in an 1880's iron truss span. I'm also looking for a picture of the Murphin Bridge, but this one is a bit more mysterious. Also, a Winfield Fries design, it was actually identical to the Hays Bridge. And when I say identical... I actually have a copy of the blueprint that was used for both and Murphin was crossed out with Hays written above it. I looked at some historic maps and found the Murphin name near another Sugar Creek crossing (I counted 40 roads in the county crossing Sugar Creek... Not including the two I-70 spans). I can't remember the location, but it might have been County Road 900 North. Many of the Sugar Creek crossings were replaced in the late 60's and early to mid-1970's. I started studying them in 1978 when I was 13 years old. I'm from New Castle and Henry County also had numerous metal trusses (Many of which were built by New Castle Bridge Co./Pan American Bridge Co./Burk Construction Co. ALL of New Castle). Unfortunately, when I moved back from Florida in 1993 the last two through trusses were being demolished. If you have come across any photos of the Duncan or Murphin Bridges, I would appreciate if you would share or direct me to them. I would also enjoy any other old bridge photos that might exist." If you can answer Tony, please do so.

On 900 East on the Rush/Hancock County line is Iron Bridge #105 over the Blue River. It still exists and was built in 1916. On April 11, 1916, the County Councils of two counties met on the bank of the Blue River to jointly opened the bids for the construction of the new span. After some discussion the summit decided to build a steel bridge and the firm selected was the Burk Constitutions Company of New Castle. The cost would be \$11,000. Bridge design wasn't standardized in those days. The bridge is one the first all riveted bridges in the state. There is a horseshoe for luck at one end.

Enough. I have told you everything that I know and some things I don't. Talk to me at jskvarenina@hotmail.com or the Daily Reporter.

2023-10-13

LINCO

By Joe Skvarenina

Greg Murphy can give you some good advice if you are writing your family history, family history. Here is one tip he has given me..." what happens is the volunteers for "Find A Grave" spell the name as it is ***spelled on the person's tombstone***. There are Kingen graves at Gravel Lawn cemetery and probably others where the Kingen name is spelled KINGAN. This causes some confusion for Kingen researchers who are trying to find ancestors / family relatives. Unfortunately, not all volunteers do as I do, that is to **explain the name was misspelled on the person's tombstone**. Samuel Kingen, born 1833 was, I believe, the first or one of the first Kingen's to come to Indiana." Thanks Greg.

Glenna Shelby tells LINCO service station's former location was torn down when Community Corrections was built. Jim Shelby says the East Main Linco location was first Rettig, then Comstock/Rettig until Comstock bought out Rettig. Harry Shelby (Jim's grandfather) bought one half of the station from Comstock then "soon after" bought out Comstock's one half. Harry Shelby was Hancock County Treasurer, Jim thinks from 1926-30, but it might have been 1930-34. The address of LINCO was 301 Main Street. The telephone number was 136 and rural truck delivery was available. Gas, oil and repairs were available.

Jonthan Levering and company are still attempting to identify the mystery road on the Coffin Farm in Blue River Township. Some roads over the years have been closed and some platted but never built. Could have possibly been named either Gordon Road or Omer Gordon Road but not certain> Do you know the Gordon Road. Speaking about roads,

the March 20, 1890, issue of the Hancock County Democrat newspaper printed a column entitled the "Traveling Correspondent" with no author's name. The column gives a good snapshot of democrat politics and the state of the community at the turn of the century. The rider embarked on horseback intent on seeing the boys about preparing to run for office. The first stop was Maxwell but Dr. Justice was out seeing patients. At Eden Riggs and Jarrett reported the trade was good. In the evening he stopped at John Jackson's house and found that Frank Jackson had lost his voice. His friends were hoping for his recovery. Next, he traveled over some terrible roads to the farm of John Hiatt formerly of Henry County. Hiatt had a good farm and nice home. Next, he visited Martin Murphin a staunch democrat. He then proceeded to Milners Corner, Charles Albea had retired as a farmer and went into business. He also visited Fred Keller a solid farmer in Green Township. He next stopped at Dr. Troy's office but he was gone visiting his heavy patient load. Dr. Troy was a candidate for state representative at the next county convention. Dr. Troy visits his patients on horseback. In his further journeys he founded that everyone was at David Wlson's sale in Brown Township. Nest he visited John B. and William Doc Hayes who he labeled jolly democrats. The former was as a candidate for county auditor. Last, he visited Jacob McMasters at Warrington who was retiring form the flour business and was going in with his son blacksmithing. He reported that Dr. Hanna had the LA Grippe. Last he

complained about the roads being damaged by the heavy teams and the soft conditions of the roads.

One last item for those who need it. The Shirley Food Pantry is open the third Tuesday of the month at the Shirley Methodist Church 7-8 in the evening.

Enough. I have told you everything that I now and some things I don't. Talk to me at jskvarenina@hotmail.com or the Daily Reporter.

2023-10-06

Glen Cove Cemetery

By Joe Skvarenina

Joe Harding, Cemetery Foreman, tells that Glen Cove Cemetery in Knightstown is comprised of “old” and a “new” section. The old public graveyard, established in 1838, consists of 3.5 acres. The southernmost part was originally a Baptist graveyard established sometime between 1835 and 1849, but today there is no longer any physical division or even suggestion of the older Baptist graveyard, the public and the denominational graveyards having seamlessly merged. The cemetery's “new” section, named Glen Cove, was established in 1886 by the local Odd Fellows Lodge No. 99. Glen Cove is an active cemetery with approximately 22,000 graves on its 51 acres. Originally designed by two professional landscape architects, Glen Cove Cemetery is on the National Register of Historic Places. There is a cenotaph at Glen Cove for local hero George Ham Cannon.

William Bjornstad writes, "Cannon was killed in action at the age of 26 when Japanese forces attacked Midway Island and Pearl Harbor, Hawaii, without warning, resulting in the US entry into World War II. His Medal of Honor citation reads: "The President of the United States of America, in the name of Congress, takes pride in presenting the Medal of Honor (Posthumously) to First Lieutenant George Hamm Cannon, United States Marine Corps, for distinguished conduct in the line of his profession, extraordinary courage and disregard of his own condition while serving as Commanding Officer of Battery H, SIXTH Marine Defense Battalion, Fleet Marine Force, Naval Air Station Midway, during the bombardment of Sand Island, Midway Islands, by Japanese forces on 7 December 1941. First Lieutenant Cannon was at his command post when he was mortally wounded by enemy shellfire. He refused to be evacuated from his post until after his men who had been wounded by the same shell were evacuated and William Bjornstad writes William directed the reorganization of his command post until forcibly removed. As a result of his utter disregard of his own condition he died from loss of blood. He gallantly gave his life for his country." In addition to the Medal of Honor, he received the Purple Heart, the American Defense Service Medal (with Base clasp), the Asiatic-Pacific Campaign Medal, and the World War II Victory Medal, all posthumously. Initially interred on Midway Island, his remains were later moved to their permanent location at Halawa Cemetery in Hawaii and from there to the National Memorial Cemetery of the Pacific in Honolulu, Hawaii. The destroyer escort USS Cannon (DE-99), launched on May 25, 1943, was named in his honor."

I have been told that Glen Cove needs a volunteer with computer skills to help with cemetery records.

If you can assist, please contact me and I can forward the information on to the appropriate person. Enough I have told you everything that I know and some things I don't. Talk to me at jskvarenina@hotmail.com or the Daily Reporter.

2023-09-22

Col Simmons Mystery

By Joe Skvarenina

Mr. Jan Turner from Knightstown shares with us the story of the Simmons Murders. I am sharing with you his abbreviated research of this fascinating tale.

Virginia Edith Simmons, age 14, and Alice Gene Simmons, age 10, daughters of Carrie Alice (Barrett) Simmons and John W. Simmons of Greenfield died in Lebanon, Indiana on Sunday, June 21, 1931. Their deaths were attributed to strychnine poisoning. Gelatin capsules were found in chicken sandwiches, prepared by the girl's mother, Carrie Simmons. The two girls along with a group of relatives had attended a family reunion that day at Memorial Park. Five other people attending the same picnic became ill, but the only deaths were the two girls. Twelve days after the picnic, on Friday, July 3, 1931, a Boone County grand jury issued two separate indictments, charging Carrie with the murder of the girls. The trial lasted from September 28 until November 5, a total of 37 days. It ended with a hung jury, the final vote being eleven to one (or eight to four depending on the source) for acquittal. By that time Carrie had spent 134 days in the Boone County jail. At the end of the trial, she was released on a \$5000 bond and allowed to return home.

The difficult thing about the trial was that there was no direct evidence concerning who might have placed the strychnine in the sandwiches which led to the deaths and sickening of five other people.

The prosecution suggested that Carrie might be mentally unstable because of the fact that her father had been confined to a hospital for the criminally insane after being convicted in the poisoning death of his second wife and stepson. The many character witnesses for the defense testified Carrie was a loving mother who couldn't bring harm to her family or anyone else. In the end, the prosecution was unable to develop a credible motive. The most damning evidence was given by a druggist from Indianapolis who identified Carrie as a woman to whom he sold a bottle of strychnine a few days before the picnic. He was certain of the time because it was his last bottle and he had to reorder. Indeed, she and her family had been shopping in Indianapolis. Because of the extensive newspaper coverage of the trial, an elderly woman in Bargersville read the account of the druggist's identification and came to Lebanon to testify that it was she who had purchased strychnine from that druggist on that day and she recalled him saying he needed to reorder because that was the last of his stock. She brought the bottle obtained during the purchase and showed it to the jury. The conflicting testimony from the druggist and the Bargersville woman clearly brought doubt to the druggist's claim. Testimony from John W. Simmons, his children and other storekeepers where the family had shopped that day indicated that Carrie did not have an opportunity to purchase anything from the druggist without the family knowing about the transaction. Did someone else have reason to want to harm John Simmons or his family? John Simmons confided to the defense counsel that there was a relative who might be carrying a grudge. The person's name was Cain. Cain and the Simmons had apparently been

estranged for some fifteen years. Cain had a history of problems with the law and had been sent to federal prison on two occasions.

The defense attorney questioned Cain on the witness stand and openly accused him of placing the poison in the sandwiches and faking his own poisoning at the picnic. The defense found a druggist at New Palestine who testified that Cain had purchased strychnine from his store a few days before the picnic. Another witness testified that he saw Cain in the vicinity of the drug store in New Palestine. Cain denied ever having been in New Palestine or having anything to do with the poisoning.

The prosecution did not attempt a retrial for the murders. According to the memoirs of Willett H. Parr, Jr., the defense attorney, there was apparently never any concerted efforts to investigate the possible involvement of Cain. In May 1933, the Boone County Circuit court, acting on a petition from the defense attorneys, formally dismissed the murder charges against Carrie. No other arrests were made in connection with the poisonings. No stories survive suggesting what might actually have happened that resulted in the deaths of these two girls. The trial was based on circumstantial evidence.

John died in 1949, age 67; Carrie died in 1969, age 85. They are both buried in the Simmons Cemetery, Willow Branch alongside their daughters, Virginia Edith and Alice Gene. Ironically, Cain, who died in 1964 at age 86, is also buried in the Simmons Cemetery, not far from John, Carrie and the two girls. This is a closed case file.

Enough. I have told you everything that know and some thugs I don't. Talk to me at jskvarenina@hotmail.com or the Daily Reporter. Thanks, Jan.

2023-09-15

Derry Murder

By Joseph Skvarenina

Greg Murphy kindly provides information from the Hancock County Democrat newspaper and 'Find A Grave' on the Samuel Derry Murder. On July 26, 1873, a long-standing family feud between Harrison Kingen, wife Lucinda and Lucinda's brother Samuel Derry erupted into the murder of Derry. Neighbors tell that the feud tended toward serious consequences on several occasions. Mrs. Kingen, wife of Harrison Kingen went to the house of Samuel Derry and drove away a gosling. The dispute centered around who owned the bird. This act revived the old dispute, and on Saturday evening, the Kingen's and Derry met near the residence of Derry, which resulted in a fight, Kingen striking Derry with a stick or club and Derry hitting Kingen with a piece of brick, when Derry jumped on Harrison Kingen he was severely stabbed at five different points on the body; one cut running from the front of the throat and around to the right shoulder; one about the junction of the right shoulder and junction of, the and neck; one on the left shoulder, extending downward toward the cavity; one under the left shoulder blade, between the ninth and tenth ribs, and nearly opposite the left nipple; the other about three inches and near the spinal column, and terminating into that column. The wound on the back. opposite the nipple, extends into the cavity and passes through the lower lobe of the left lung, into and through the diaphragm, and into and through the spleen, the total length of the wound being about four and one-fourth inches, counting from the surface to the lower part of the spleen.

Drs. Howard and Tague attended to Mr. Derry, and did all for him that could be done under the circumstances; but he was beyond the reach of medical skill, and he lingered until yesterday morning at 5 o'clock July 30 Derry he died. There was no one present when the difficulty took place save Kingen and his wife and Derry. The daughter of Derry, who is about sixteen years old, heard some of the acts of, the parties, and it is difficult to tell how the fight commenced or who struck the fatal blow that caused the death of Derry. When the news of his death reached him. Coroner Copper caused a coroner's jury to be impaneled and had Drs. Howard & Martin, assisted by Tague, to make a postmortem examination. The coroner's jury, after hearing the testimony, indicted the Kingen's. Mrs. Kingen was eventually convicted of manslaughter but since a husband cannot testify against own wife the verdict was overturned and set for retrial. Samuel Derry is buried at Curry's Chapel and the Kingen's at Park Cemetery.

Enough I have told you everything that I know and some things I don't. Talk to me.

2023-09-08

REMC

By Joe Skvarenina

Mark Highsmith wants to know about his building, Highsmith Guns. At one time it was known as the Miller Building, REMC Headquarters and a roller-skating arena. Also, a city-wide gym was located at the site but probably a different building.

Following the end of World War II, much of the telephone facilities that had been installed at the beginning of the century had become obsolete. Capital for much needed upgrades was difficult to obtain. Under President Harry Truman, the Rural Electric Administration's loan program was expanded to include loans to telephone cooperatives. With the help and encouragement of the Hancock County REMC, the five community telephone companies began discussions about consolidating into a single telephone cooperative. About 1940, the Eden Telephone Company was renamed the New Eden Telephone Company. March 6, 1941, exhibitors displayed electric appliances at the 5th Annual Meeting at the Memorial Building, the Mt. Lebanon Ladies Guild served the luncheon and John T. Wilson was Program Manager. August 2, 1941, 3,000 people attended the REA show on the Scott farm in Jackson Township. People from Hancock, Rush, Shelby and Henry counties attended. There were educational exhibits by manufacturers and local merchants. Farmers were looking for electricity from plucking chickens to milking cows. By 1944, the rural electrics found it advantageous to have a central voice in Washington, D.C., and organized the National Rural Electric Cooperative (NRECA). Today, NRECA is supported by 900 electric cooperatives nationwide including Ninestar. The NRECA currently offers a cooperative employee benefit program, lobbying, management training, tax legal environmental advice, technical economic research plus other areas.

Maurice Woodward joined the Hancock County REMC Board in 1946 and was president from 1965 to 1976. He became involved statewide in 1986. He was a charter member of the Indiana Rural Cooperative Federal Credit Union. He was active for 20 years. December 5, 1945, Hancock REMC purchased 47 miles of line from Greenfield Power and Light for a cost of \$82,000. Hancock REMC increased the inadequate voltage of 2,300 to 7,300 volts within the 47 miles and replaced the transformers and made much needed improvements. March 6, 1947, Hancock County REMC's Barton Moses was the speaker at the Greenfield Kiwanis meeting. In 1947, the local REMC had a new location in the Miller Building. In May 1945, Hancock County REMC and other electric cooperatives issued a booklet with the rules for electric wiring in rural areas.

February 27, 1948, a new substation was approved for Mohawk. The load was split between Mohawk and Willow Branch. There was a display of electrical appliances in connection with the Lions Club Carnival at the REMC on North State Street. April 1, 1948, Hancock County REMC's Annual Meeting was held at the REMC Building and lunch was served by the Nameless Creek Ladies Society. November 17, 1949, REMC's Barton Moses was the speaker at the Brandywine Township Farm meeting. According to Moses, there were lines every 400 miles and few farms were not electrified. Also, there was new equipment for dairy farms' water

systems. September 15, 1949, the third annual Hancock County Appliance Dealers Association meeting was held at the REMC with 18 appliance dealers being represented.

October 28, 1949, Harry Truman signed HR 2960 amending the Rural Electrification Act of 1936 to provide for a rural telephone program. What do you know about the REMC Building or Highsmith Guns?

Enough. I have told you everything that I know and some things I don't. Talk to me at jskvarenina@hotmail.com or the Daily Reporter.

2023-09-01

By Joe Skvarenina

Mark Highsmith, Highsmith Guns, wants to know about the history of the KKK in Greenfield. The year 1923 was a period of heavy Klan activity in Greenfield. Some people today are afraid to talk about the Klan. But I firmly believe that acknowledging the truth will set the us free from the ugly past.

The Rev, V.W. Blair, a former pastor of the Greenfield Christian Church addressed a large audience at the courthouse of both ladies and gentlemen on the mission of the KKK. One member reported "From the number of cards turned in to the organizer, it is evident we are soon to have a Klan in our midst, who will no doubt display a fiery cross in the distant day."

In May of 1923 it did happen. According to local newspaper coverage the Ku Klux Klan staged a demonstration in Greenfield, "the likes of which have never been seen before." By 8 P.M. a crowd of 2,000 persons had gathered on Main Street to watch the parade, which however did not appear until 9:30. Several Klansmen for Indianapolis, Knightstown, New Castle, Anderson, Muncie, Elwood, and other cities marched unmasked. Many were candidates and were escorted to the Fair Grounds, where the grandstand and grounds were filled with those attempting to witness the secret ceremonies. The crowds were reported to be orderly with no visible drunkenness. At the time the newspaper used superlatives to describe the event. It was said that 6,040 automobiles were east from Audubon Road, Indianapolis to Greenfield in the early evening and there was an almost unbroken line of cars coming from Cambridge City to Greenfield in the other direction.

Indiana Historian James Madison has written the seminal book on the Ku Klan called "The Ku Klux Klan, In the Heartland". In it Dr. Madison writes, "Our democracy demands we open all the pages of in the book of history." In doing this he examines many of the critical stories about the Klan in Indiana and the Midwest in the 1920's. Hancock County doesn't escape this examination of Klan members within the community, One such individual was Daisy Barr. Barr was a Friends preacher. In addition to Greenfield Barr served in congregations in Muncie, Lewisville, Fairmount and New Castle. She entered the Klan along with GOP politics in the early 1920's. She served as the first female Vice GOP Chair in Indiana. She was brought into the Klan by D.C. Stephenson. She was also active in the Women's Temperance Movement. She eventually went on to serve the national Klan movement. Barr told a group in Marion Indiana that if Christ were on the earth at the present time, he would have certainly joined the Klan. According to Madison's book," Barr had an eye for the main chance when it came to fundraising- so much so that here enemies inside and outside the Klan accused her of keeping Klan collections for her own."...the anti-Klan editor of the Muncie Post-Democrat, was her must vicious enemy labeling her Daisy Doodle Barr." The Madison book is really worth a read.

Hinchman Hall and Wagon shop, the soup kitchen at 202 East Main Street, also served Klan purposes. The Daily Reporter tells us on May 23 & 24 1924 it was the site for entertainment for the local Klaven of the KKK. The film "'Toll of Justice" was being shown in

the Hall with the doors opening at 6:30, 35 cents adult and 15 cents for children. Klansmen were encouraged to bring their families. Also, around the same time and across the street the "Why Not" theater was showing D.W. Griffith's "Birth of the Nation". A flick which had a cast of 18,000 people, 3,000 horses and was on 18 reels. This film glamorized the role of the Klan in the country.

Enough. I have told you everything that I know and some things I don't. Talk to me at jskavrenina@hotmail.com or the Daily Reporter.

2023-08-25

Dr. Ted

By Joseph Skvarenina

Hancock County has been blessed with many physicians over the years. One of the unique and celebrated ones was Dr. Ted Gabrielsen. He is retired now but saw our hospital from almost the very beginnings.

Dr. Ted Gabrielsen began his career desiring to be a Salvation Army Officer. Entering Ashbury College in Wilmore Kentucky between his freshman and sophomore year he felt a spiritual calling to go into medicine and become missionary physician. Excelling on scientific exams, he took the William J. Cook Scholarship Exam and was awarded a full scholarship for four years of college. He graduated from the University of Illinois with his M.D. Dr. Ted did his medical training at Methodist Hospital in Indianapolis for internship and residency in surgery. He felt being a surgeon was the best way he could help people. From 1963 to 1967 he worked at a small rural hospital at Yeong Dong South Korea with the Salvation Army.

As a young physician, he began private practice with Dr. Habegger in Indianapolis. During four years with this practice, he worked long hours at Community, Methodist and St Vincents Hospitals. In 1973 the Hancock County Medical Society was looking to recruit specialists, especially another surgeon. Drs Hunter, Anderson, and Kinnaman encouraged Dr. Ted to come to Greenfield. In 1975 he moved his family and became the second full-time surgeon at the hospital. At first, he shared an office with Dr. Anderson, eventually moving to a house turned into an office on North State Street which he eventually donated to Hancock County Crises Pregnancy Center. He and Dr. Anderson worked solo, but they covered each other's patients. After Dr. Moenning left in 1979, Dr. Ted became the only staff surgeon. As such he was constantly on call. The long hours were reminiscent of his intern days. During the blizzard of 1978, he skied cross country to the hospital and performed six surgeries. He recalled one patient riding home on a snowmobile. He and Dr. Hunter were the only doctors able to get to the hospital to care for patients during the storm. Both lived close by and, "it was easier to wade through the snow than drive." Dr. Hunter praised Dr. Gabrielsen as a dedicated leader and stabilizing force for the hospital. To Dr. Gabrielsen it was never about the money. Dr. Ted believed that it was his special calling to be, to be a surgeon, it was about serving people. Prior to Dr. Cam joining him in 1991, Dr. Dave Snyder and Dr. Steve Dillinger were part of the practice for three or four years.

Dr. Gabrielsen remembers the days when the hospital was the biggest ad for beige and green Kool- Vent Awnings to cut down the sun from the west. Later improvements were brought by expansion and technological advances. Important to his practice was the development and acquisition of laparoscopes and endoscopes transmitted to television receivers. He also recalls pouring over expansion plans to ensure adequate provision in the plans for the use of advanced technology and sophisticated anesthesia. When asked how surgery has changed, He believes that physicians today have lost continuity in patient care and there has been considerable advancements in anesthesia and surgery.

Dr. Ted retired in 2012. He says that "I did 25,000 surgeries prior moving his records to computer. At one point he was doing 35 surgeries in one week. "Dr. Gabrielsen believes his greatest accomplishment in life was marrying Jeanne Radar, who supported him during his career as office manager. He wouldn't change a thing about his career. The best part of working at Hancock Health was that the doctors worked together, no matter whose patient it was. According to Dr Ted, "Greenfield has been very good to me." He believes that medical care in Hancock County is in good hands. Dr. Gabrielsen two sons Cam and Jon both practiced medicine with him 21 and 4 years respectively. He has two daughters, Jill and Beth. One granddaughter is a nurse. He has eighteen grandchildren.

Dr. Gabrielsen sat on the board of Salvation Army of Indianapolis and Harbor Light. He currently is on the Advisory Board of the Salvation Army. He is also on the Distinguished Board of Hancock Regional Hospital and is a member of the American College of Surgeons. He served sixteen years on the Hancock Library Board and for the last fifteen years he has served on the Harbor Light Drug and Alcohol Rehabilitation Board.

Enough I have told you everything that I know and some things I don't. Talk to me at jskvarenina@hotmail.com or the Daily Reporter.

2023-08-18

By Joseph Skvarenina

It was in 1883 that the 'Old Swimmin Hole and Eleven More Poems' was published in Indianapolis and Cincinnati.

The discussion still goes on regarding the true location of the Ole Swimmin Hole. Riley never really identified the site. On April 24, 1965 issue of the Indianapolis Times addresses the controversy. Harry Roberts, then 71, was interviewed as a source of the story. The article reads in part, "The location of Riley's Old Swimmin Hole is a subject that brings all sorts of answers from old timers. For example, Brandywine Creek runs just east of Roberts" Lake cutting it into a point. Riley park is south and east from the Lake."

"Some people say Riley was swimmin at a spot now in the park," Roberts said , " others say his swimin hole was just below the spot where the creek comes out of my lake.' Other say the City just wanted to honor Riley so they just set the "Ole Swimmin Hole" where people could get to it. Some say Riley probably never went to the same place twice. Others tell us the "Swimmin Hole" was on the south side of 40. there is a pond by the Railroad bridge which would have made a dandy Swimmin Hole.

Greg Murphy writes some time ago, "I have been working on researching my mother's Slifer genealogy line and found an old obituary for my maternal 2nd great grandfather's, (Washington O. Slifer) brother, Jacob A Slifer 1853-1921.

Jacob and wife Selma J. (Osborn) Slifer left Greenfield and moved to Denver, Colorado.

It appears Jacob was friends with James Whitcomb Riley and his some time ago obituary mentions one of Riley's poems which gives a fairly sound description of the actual location of the Ol Swimmin Hole.

"The bridge of the railroad now crosses the spot.
Whar the old divin' log lays sunk and forgot...What's your take on the location."

Ok, Greg now we are getting into the deep weeds. I don't think anyone knows the actual site of the 'ol swimmin hole'. According to some it was placed in Riley Park at the current site by Gilbert Winslow, City Engineer, because no one knew the exact location. A large stone identifies that site. Also, some say it is on the north side of the National Road. Others say it is further north along the Brandywine near Roberts Lake. At one time there was a spur rail line which ran through Riley Park which answered the railroad bridge question on the north side of the National Road.

Enough. I have told you everything that I know and some things I don't. Talk to me at jskvarenina@hotmail.com or the Daily Reporter.

2023-08-11

Knightstown Shelbyville Railroad and Raysville

By Joe Skvarenina

The Knightstown & Shelbyville railway was completed about 1848 and operated until 1853. According to the Richman history it crossed the southeast corner of Blue River township in Hancock County, following the south valley of the Blue River. The old grades are still seen in some areas in the Blue River township. By 1850 it was completed to Knightstown. The Henry County history tells that it made corner lots in town very valuable in town. When it was abandoned the Louisville Benton Harbor Division of the Big Four Railroad followed the right of way for a short distance in Rush County. I am piecing together the history of the Knightstown Shelbyville Railroad from various sources. What do you know?

Have you ever been to Raysville In Henry county? It is on the Blue River opposite Knightstown. It was founded by Judge John Anderson about the time the National Road went through the area. The Diary of Calvin Fletcher extends from 1817 to 1866 talks about Raysville. Fletcher was a central Indiana lawyer, farmer and banker. He read law in Urbana, Ohio and Indianapolis and was admitted to the bar in both states. He practiced law in Indianapolis and for twenty years he traveled twice a year to the fifth judicial circuit which included Hancock County and ten other Indiana counties. Fletcher was antislavery and advocated colonization. He was a temperance proponent. In 1865 he was the highest income taxpayer in Marion County. Over the years his journeys took him down the National Road. In 1827 he wrote, "that National Road has been permanently located west to the state line." In 1835 he tells, " Take the National Road as roads have not been much traveled are very rough. We proceed to Knightstown 60 houses National Road not yet constructed but workman at it. Raysville nearby with four houses." Also, an Article in a January 1909 Daily Reporter tells of a haunted house in Raysville on the Blue River. Several men from Charlottesville went to the location and knocked on the door. An older Quaker lady dressed in the old-style dress and appeared at the door. All she would do was quote scripture and wouldn't answer any questions. When they touched her, she would disappear. According to the article they were scared out of their wits.

Enough. I have told you everything that I know and some things I don't. Talk to me at jksvarenina@hotmail.com or the Daily Reporter.

2023-08-04

Doctor Joseph Whitesell

By Joe Skvarenina

Our own Dr. Mike Fletcher shares with us his third great grandfather, Dr Joseph Whitesell (1808-1884). Whitesell was born in Pennsylvania, youngest of nine children, his father was an immigrant from Holland. He signed up to serve in the Revolutionary War but resigned after six months for health reasons. In 1825 he studied medicine under Dr. Speer in Pittsburg. He came to West Liberty Indiana in 1829. In 1831 Whitesell moved to Knightstown. Also, that year he married Eleanor D, the daughter of Whitesell M. Cary, founder of Knightstown.

In the early days West Liberty was a community of 16 houses, some stores and a tavern. It was platted April 8, 1823. West Liberty was partially located in Rush County. West Liberty was $\frac{3}{4}$ of a mile south of Knightstown. By 1826 William Winkoop opened a log tavern at the site. Other merchants in West Liberty included Aaron Maxwell, Allen Hiatt and Robert Woods who ran a grocery. Bicknell Cole was the first postmaster. The Maxwell's store was a single room log cabin and a family residence. It housed his stock of goods and a whiskey barrel. Whitesell received his first certificate to practice medicine on May 7, 1832. He started to practice with \$5.18 to his name but loaned someone \$5 which was never repaid. But with the coming of the National Road and the founding of Knightstown, West Liberty, located along the old Centerville Road, decayed and eventually disappeared. Nothing is at the site. Dr. Joseph Elliott was the first physician in the area.

In the early days, early physicians like Dr. Whitesell had ride many miles to help patients. In 1830 the area was "howling wilderness" and the roads where little more than a bridle paths. At one point, Dr. Whitesell went to see a patient on Six Mile Creek and got seriously lost. Stories abound of bears coming out of the river bottom and having to be chased through the streets. What do you know about the old Centerville Pike? Thanks Mike!

Enough. I have told you everything that I know and some things I don't. Talk to me at jskvarenina@hotmail.com or the Daily Reporter

2023-07-28

Matt Chappell

By Joe Skvarenina

Matt Chappell is Corporate Executive Chef for Leo's, also known as Pride Investment Partners. He comes to Hancock County from Vanderbilt University in Nashville Tennessee where he served as Executive Chef. But Matt's roots are deep in Hancock County especially the Fortville area. Matt is the one responsible for building the Leo's fantastic menu of bowls and kalachi's. According to Chappell, "Whatever your favorite, I'll make it better than the best one you ever had." Matt's great Aunt and Uncle, Sina and Harry Chappell, owned and operated Chappell's restaurant in Fortville for 40 years. To many Chappell's was down home cooking at its best. Chappell even made their own ice cream with 10% butter fat. Chappell's was located at 230 S. Main Street in Fortville. A fire in 1964 destroyed the establishment and there was \$35,000 dollars in smoke and water damage. In addition to Fortville three firetrucks from Pendleton, Lapel, and Ingalls came to battle the blaze. Eighty-year-old George Young who lived in the apartments above lost his life to the fire. Other apartment residents Warren Walker, Bernard Hartup, Percy Gamble, Wilbur Bland and Leroy Goldsmith made it out alive. The fire seemed to start in the corner of Young's room. At one time in the south end of the building housed the Fortville Post Office, a used appliance store, a pizza shop and Mia's clothing. Both of the Chappells were active in the Brotherhood and Sisterhood. Elks and Modern Woodman. Harry Died in 1952 and Sina in 1975. The Couple are buried in Gravel Lawn. Many of the older Chappell graves are in Chappell Shore Cemetery northeast of County road 700 of Meridian Road. There is a variation of spelling in the Chappell name. Children of Harry and Sina included Wilma 'Chick', Russell, Margie, Pauline, Betty Jean, Irma, Ronie, Larry, Paul, Dale, Vivian and Dick. By the way thanks to Hancock County Historical Society member Rebecca Crowe for all the research.

Local Holly Lawson was just appointed editor to the Outdoor Indiana magazine put out by Indiana's department of Natural Resources. Congrats to Holly.

Enough. I have told you everything that I know and some things I don't. Contact me at jskvarenina@hotmail.com or the Daily Reporter.

2023-07-21

Noah Frye

By Joe Skvarenina

Charles Gambrel want to know about the Noah Frye murder. Mr. Frye was murdered June 11, 1957 at his farm which was located three mile east and ½ mile south of Stringtown. Four young men had come to his door requesting to borrow a tire pump. They beat Mr. Frye unmercifully and robbed him of a wristwatch, a pocket watch and a billfold with \$32 dollars in it. Noah kept a loaded shot gun by the door but never got to use it for his own defense. It was thought because Frye was involved in a \$1000 cattle sale the felons thought he had a lot of money hidden in the house. The auction had been written about in the paper. After he became conscious from the beating Noah drove to his neighbor, Mr. Peacock, for help. Mr. Peacock took him to Joe Fisk the sheriff at the time. He transported Frye to Methodist Hospital where he consequentially died. Four individuals were apprehended for this heinous act. They were Nick Csire, and Richard Boschen for Indianapolis. Also, Jack Randolph and George P. Miller from Greenfield. Samuel J. Offutt was the judge and Melville Watson, one-time sheriff, was the prosecuting attorney at the time. Al the defendants got life in prison some later to be paroled.

John Jackson writes that Ira Fisk was sheriff and so was his son Joe. Joe was the founder of Fisk Sanitation. In the 1930's according to Jackson, Fisk took a leave of absence from Eli Lilly and started a trash pickup business with a trailer pulled behind his car. Joe Fisk was sheriff in the 1950's when the alleged killers of Noah Fry were first incarcerated in the jail. Red Kleiman followed Fisk and Jackson has a faint memory of Comstock and Mulvahill. as possible Hancock County Sheriff's. In Jim Bradbury and Fred Bixler tell us that the office of Hancock County Sheriff was established in 1828 soon after Hancock County was established. The first Hancock Sheriff was John Foster. Foster served until 1830. There has been 48 unique and separate individuals who have served as Hancock County Sheriff over the years.

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2023-07-14

By Joe Skvarenina

1962 was a banner year for the citizens of the Shirley Wilkinson area. Mrs. Marvella Bayh, wife of at that time Democrat Senatorial nominee Evan Bayh was the featured speaker at the Hancock Democrat Party pitch in the Wilkinson School Building on August 28. The meeting was open to the public. Mrs. Bayh was the daughter of Delbert Hern of Enid Oklahoma where her father was a Democrat County Chairman. She met Birch in 1951 at the American Fam Bureau National Speaking Contest in Washington D. C.. They were married eight months later in her home town of Enid Oklahoma. At the time of her speech, they had a six-year-old son, Evan. Today the only thing left of the Wilkinson School building is the gym.

Also, in 1962 Shirley residents, Mr. and Mrs. Keith White of Shirley received the runner up prize at the 2nd Annual National Travel Trailer Rally in the Ozarks for the title of "Mr. and Mrs. Typical Travel Trailerite of 1962." Keith White took his first travel trailer trip in 1935 and had since traveled 35,000 miles in 45 states and Canada. Families of 24 states attended the Rally sponsored by the Mobile Home Manufacturers Association, Travel Coach Association, the Mobile Homes Dealers, and the Travel Trailers Clubs of America. More than 250 people participated.

In 1936 Keith, took over White Petroleum. He was 24 years of age. He decided he would like to propose to his lovely girlfriend Barbara. Unfortunately, he wasn't quite earning enough to buy a diamond. As luck would have it a man came through Shirley one day and offered to trade Keith a small diamond for a tank of fuel. With that diamond Keith proposed to Miss Barbara Pheneger. He promised after he opened his third gas station, he would buy her a much bigger diamond ring. Keith had often helped his father in the business. He continued to make rural deliveries and still received gas by trains for the next two years. He was first in the area to take on several new business practices like buying a 3,400-gallon tank semi for hauling his own fuel oil and gasoline to and from bulk plants in Michigan, Ohio, and Kentucky. He also had the first pump and meter on the delivery truck which was made from a washing machine pump. Standard Oil of Anderson came to see it and copy the design for their trucks. Keith was also the first to set up a degree-day system and budget plan for his customers. Keith expanded the business to four stations, two bulk plants and several commercial accounts. Independent gasoline was always sold in these stations. Me

In 1954, Keith incorporated White Petroleum and on September 9, 1955, set up and registered "White Flash" as its trademark. Keith suffered a heart attack while on vacation at Lake Shafer and was taken to White County Hospital. Keith White died in 1964 at the age of fifty-three. At the time, his three sons-Danny, Phillip, Richard White and wife Barbara took over the business and became the third generation of Whites to operate the family company. At this point White Flash consisted of four stations and two bulk plants. It would later become Gas America than Leo's.

Enough. I have told you everything that I know and some things I don't. Talk to me at the Daily Reporter or Jskvarenina@hotmail.com.

2023-07-07

Auto Dealers

By Joe Skvarenina

Charles Gambrel wants to know if Greenfield ever had a Studebaker dealer and about car dealerships. I know over the years there have been many auto dealers in town. Hancock County was involved in the early history of the auto. But I don't know about Studebaker.

According to the Richman History of Hancock County about 1895, or possibly a year or two earlier, S. Morrison and Thomas Springer established a telephone factory at McCordsville. A few years later they sold it to the Eureka Electric Company, of Chicago, who operated the plant until 1902 when it was sold to Luther Frost, Seymour Morrison, Frank Martindale, and others. The purchasers then incorporated under the name of the Columbia Electric Company and continued to manufacture telephones until 1905. In that year Luther Frost and others established the Leader Automobile factory, at McCordsville, where the first Leader Automobiles were assembled. This plant was operated until 1907, when it was moved to Knightstown.

Margaret Scott writes about the early auto dealers in Greenfield, "My Dad Orville Nigh, had the dealership for Hudson Terraplane called "Nigh & Allen Motor Sale," The dealership was located across from the Old Library on North Street according to Ms. Scott.

Stringtown is a community along the National Road. At one time there was a blacksmith shop, sawmill and a foundry run at the site by Liberty Trees. Early autos were produced at the site. Liberty Tree wrote a book entitled "A True Story of Eighty Four Years a Busy Life" The whole book is in verse, "I have made boots and shoes ,with old wooden pegs, And they were no low cuts, they came way up on your legs..." Trees tells there was only one log house standing in Wilkinson in 1870...But when the railroad came the town boomed. I visit there in 1881 there were flourishing places of business, elevator, hotel, restaurant and you could get plenty to eat and drink and not soft drinks either.

Who knows about Holt Motors I believe that it was Gant's Opera House and a livery stable before Holt Motors. In the 1950s, and into the 60s, the building on the southeast corner of North and State Streets was Jeffries and Son Livery. In addition, in 1922 the Greenfield City Directory it shows a listing for O.H. Monger Ford, 25 North State which is the old address of the Ashley's Carpet site now gone. The site is now a parking lot.

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2023-06-30

Beverly Montrose

By Joe Skvarenina

A 1978 edition of the Log Chain, which is the Historical Society's newsletter tells us, at some time in the early part of 20th century, an Indian was observed walking up and down the roads of Brandywine Township. He seemed to be searching for something. People saw him several times during a two-week period, then was seen no more. Sometime later, a large stone along a small stream on what is 300 south just west of State Road 9 was found overturned. The supposition was that when the Indian had left this part of the country something had been hidden there. If so, this story must have been handed down because two or three generations had passed since the Indians had left. Beverly Montrose who passed this legend on had heard for two separate individuals. The story was slightly different, but essentially the same. The story came to Beverly from R.C. Low and Laura Wickliff.

Chris Deshong shares with us Beverly's note cards which she kept in a shoe box. Miss Montrose taught at the Brandywine School for 1926-1931. She taught all subjects and the 5th and 6th grades because Brandywine was an elementary school and the township didn't have a high school. Though Her primary interest was English. In her notes she records the nicknames of the school teams and some coaches for example Wilkinson was the Bulldogs; New Palestine was the Dragons Coach was Keesling; Fortville was the Demons Coach Helms, McCordsville was the Pirates Coach Huey and Phares; Mt. Comfort was the Buccaneers Coach Good; Charlottesville was the Eagles Coach Bell; Maxwell was the Stars Coach Lemley; Eden was the Fliers Coach Hines and Westland was the Bears Coach Fuller. She talks about the Teachers Institute which was held annually for county teachers arriving in OH Monger's ford and barely making it on time. Monger was a local auto dealer located on State Street at the location of Ashley' carpet now a parking lot. She tells that Dr. Roscoe Thomas from Gorton Mass. was on the agenda talking about southern Germany, a talk on arithmetic by Sue Blasingham and lunch was served by the PTA. The menu included baked chicken and corn, bread, gravy, perfection salad apple sauce and various kinds of pie. According to Montrose "it was good but hardly up the level we had been paying 50 cents for." She also discusses some news of the time including the fire at Mt. Comforts School because of a faulty wire, Henry Jessup's home burning down and also the Greenfield fire stating at Thomas's Drug Store. She also talks about going to the Greenfield Library which would have been the old Carnegie. She goes on to tell "we went down Mount Street and stopping at Carr's. I got 'Sweetheart Stories' and 'The Love story' and Rosie's (her sister's) buttons..." She goes on to tell, "Am feeling rather listless tonight. Guess I will write to some of the men who have ads in the 'Love Story Magazine' or rather 'True Romances'. I think it would be rather fun." She tells about her meals, " Had pork gravy and tea for breakfast, hamburger sandwich and mashed potatoes & gravy for lunch, lima beans and canned beef & tea for supper..." She also tells that I bought a compact at Watkins for 50 cents and a tablet for 10 cents at Early's to help pass the time and allow myself to loaf in their respective stores." She also talks about play practice at the school... and "walked down North Street to Schneiders Restaurant and bought a second breakfast more for the warmth than the food." The date all this happened was probably 1929. Thanks Chris for a picture of the past.

Enough I have told you everything that I know and some things I don't. Talk to me at jskvarenina@hotmail.com or the Daily Reporter.

2023-06-23

Brandywine School

By Joe Skvarenina

Linda Conner writes, "I always read with interest your column. I enjoy learning about the county's history and look for names I might know or family members. In your March 31, 2023, article in the Reporter, you spoke of the schoolhouses built in the county and at the end wondered how many of them are left. If the grade school in Brandywine Township you mentioned was located on what is now 400 South and 100 East. It was torn down several years ago. There is a concrete pad left there. My husband and his siblings attended there." Yes, it is Brandywine School. In 1915 there were 30 one room schoolhouses in the county. No township schools had consolidated at that point into larger township schools except Blue River Township. The Brandywine Grade School was constructed in 1923. The township had no high school. In 1906 Brandywine Township had five one room schoolhouses with only one teacher. Carrolton School had two instructors. Prior to our entry in WWI Hancock County had 11 school corporations and 52 different schools. Thirty-three schools had one teacher each.

Driving around the countryside you can still see many of the one room school in various stages of repair. Not all one room schoolhouses had a single room for instruction, some had more. One room refers to all eight grades being taught in one room. If you travel west into Philadelphia there is an old schoolhouse on the North side of the road. It is the District #1 School and was built by Sugar Creek Township Trustee James Manche in 1891. The building served as a community center and later was converted to a residence by the Charnstorm family. The last class in that school was in 1925-26. Mrs. Wade Fuller was the last teacher. Teachers in those days were called Professors. Two famous teachers at District #1 was John Felt who later became a lawyer and judge and George Richman who wrote a county history and was Superintendent of Schools.

Another one room schoolhouse along 40 was the Brown School District #2 established in 1882. Originally built two miles west of Philadelphia, it was moved two miles east of Gem on the north side of National Road. The Township Trustee was William Barnard. It was moved later south of 40 on the west side of the road and is a residence. The last year for students was 1921-22 and the last teacher was Gladys Knoop. In the good old days, the Township Trustee also served as the school superintendent. As Trustee he paid the bills and hired the hired the teachers along with his other duties.

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2023-06-16

Industrial Development

By Joe Skvarenina

In 1888 Greenfield was a gas boom town and had the industry to prove it. The industrial area was between Center Street and Pennsylvania Streets and along the old railroad tracks on Depot and Osage. Streets. In fact, the Old Home Stove company was in a building which the Indiana Box used to be until it burned down and now any empty lot by Mitchell Fleming printing This building might have also been National Adjustable Chair Company. The Greenfield Bottle and Fruit Jar was built in 1888 at the site of the west side Hardees. In 1897 this site became the Hollowegard Reese Bottle Work and remained that until 1897 at that point it was the Owens Bottle Company. It was closed in 1913 and burned down in 1923. I have been told when they built Hardees, they found much glass scrap.

Also, in 1887 William Mitchell of Greenfield published the "Home and School Visitor" for township schools in Indiana. It was like today's " Weekly Reader" and written for the second to the fifth grade with stories like "White House Home Life", "The Sad End of a Greedy Hen", "Little Squirrel", "The Puzzled Sheep", "Whistle Down the Brakes" and others. It was meant for the supplemental reading in the public schools of the time. William Mitchell Printing was located at 25 South State Street, probably the location of the Veterans Park. Mitchell also sold township supplies like the universal wool erasers and schoolhouse furniture. Ads in the publication included: Dalmbert Groceries, North side of Main Street, the Star Grocery Store and for Harper's new copy book adopted by the Hancock Board of Education. In those days the various Township Trustees ran the township schools and there was a county Board of education. If you ever run across one of the "Home and School Visitor", it worth picking up. I don't know when it ended publication. Mitchell also started the Hancock County Democrat Newspaper.

I ran into Armin Apple the other day, didn't hurt him. He told me that the flag in the display case in the Courthouse main floor was the flag that flew over county government in 9/11. They needed a larger one flag but had to make do until it arrived. Do you have memories of 9/11?

Enough. I have told you everything that I know and some things I don't. Talk to me at the Daily Reporter or Jskvarenina@hotmail.com.

2023-06-09

Western Guidebook

By Joe Skvarenina

Vincent Reynold shares with us Steele's Western Guidebook book published by Steele and Peck in 1839. It really is a treasure. The inside cover contains a pencil drawing of people going west on a canal boat probably on the Erie Canal, the passengers are sitting on the roof of the vessel watching the scenery go by. Also, a man in period dress was penciled inside cover. Reynold's mother family came from Ireland to Montreal to St. Louis. I believe that he obtained the Guidebook from family member Charlotte Davison. The Guidebook is sort of an emigrants' guide to settling in the west today the Midwest. It covers the states of Ohio, Illinois, Indiana, Michigan and Wisconsin Territory before statehood. It talks about the Erie Canal and the National Road, which passes through Indiana as a great advantage. It also says that Indianapolis is also accessible by boat. It indicates the population of Indianapolis at the time was 1500. The land cost \$1.25 an acre. There was 12,699,096 acres of public land available as soon as Indians were removed. In addition, there were 69 courts, and the state population was 460,000.

My mom and dad liked to go for rides on the weekends with no destination in mind. Gas was cheap in those days, and we often ended up on the National Road. Does anyone remember the spring on the south side of 40 as you entered Knightstown? There was a pipe coming out of the hill and you could stop and get a drink of water. I have looked for some remnants of the site to no avail. Let me know.

The work on the road in Indiana began 1829 and reached the Terre Haute in 1834. The survey party was told to lay out the road as an 80-foot width road with the middle 30 feet to be graded to be macadamized with ten inches of stone for use of stagecoaches and mail coaches. Jonathan Knight led the federal surveying party into Indiana. One interesting town along the way called Vandalia was located several miles north of the National Road so they moved the town south to share in the expected commerce and profits. The new city was called Cambridge City.

The express coaches could carry a letter from Washington to Indianapolis in three days and to St. Louis in five days. A letter in the regular mail would take twice as long. Towns grew up around the taverns along the old route like Starr's and Sloane's in Richmond, the Mansion House in Richmond, and the Huddleston House in Cambridge City. Huddleston House and the Mansion House can still be viewed today. The federal government operated the old pike until 1848 and turned over to the state to keep the road in shape.

Enough. I have told everything that I know and some things I don't. Talk to me at jskvarenina@hotmail.com or the Daily Reporter.

2023-06-02

More Coffins

By Joe Skvarenina

Before the arrival of the first white settlers perhaps several hundred Indians were located in Blue River Township. The home of the largest village was about a mile south of Westland Friends Church on the Abe Coffin Farm where there is currently an old log cabin which I hear had been fixed up. The Coffin family arrived in Blue River Township around 1830. They were farmers and also made shingles.

Bonnie Lyons writes, " My mother was Abe Coffin & Mary Etta Binford Coffin's niece. Uncle Abe's daughters had the log Coffin cabin restored as a Bicentennial project in 1976. The Connor Prairie people did the restoration of the circa 1823 cabin using native stone and timber, and it was really beautiful when first done. I have a clipping of a nice article in the Sunday newspaper showing Hilda Coffin Florea and Sylvia Coffin Scott or Lena Coffin Wilson in rocking chairs in front of the stone fireplace. When we took visiting Coffin cousins down, the big, white house was in a sad state of disrepair and the cabin was nearly completely overgrown with vines. A family member told us several years ago that the property had been purchased by Uncle Abe's great grandchildren. I knew that the Coffin family were farmers but did not know that they made shingles! Something to add to my family history, thank you! Several of the next generation were schoolteachers, including my grandfather, John Aldred Coffin and his cousins Hilda and Martha Coffin."

Betty Lyons from Anderson also talks about her family member Elisha Coffin who resided in Blue River township. He joined the service of the United States May 1863 6th Calvary at Charlottesville. In was confined to Andersonville the fall of 1864. He died of the effects of the Confederate prisons December 2, 1888, at 40 years of age. he is buried in the Gilboa cemetery. The only man executed in Hancock County is also buried in Gilboa, Edward Coffin who was executed October 9, 1934.

Where there any other Hancock County men in Andersonville prison?

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2023-05-26

By Joe Skvarenina

When I go up in the Courthouse elevator, I notice a small plaque memorializing its dedication. The exact date was March 3, 1955. Commissioners Chester Gates, Lester Haines and Paul Murphy were in attendance at the dedication along with Auditor Bruce Grandison and George Dickmann Prosecuting Attorney. Greg Murphy tells my grandfather, Paul Murphy, was a Hancock Commissioner in the 1950s and Hancock Treasurer in 1960s and the 1970s. In 1950 Chester Gates had replaced democrat and farmer Commissioner Paul Unger from Brandywine Township who died in office. Unger had served as commissioner once before in 1918. Other County Commissioners at the time were Frank Thomas for Jackson Township and Paul Murphy from Buck Creek Township. Murphy previous service included Buck Creek Township Trustee. Murphy was a WW I Veteran, member of American Legion Lodge #119 and member of the Fortville Masonic Lodge. On January 6, 1955, the following individuals held office in Hancock County: Mrs. Reba Frank, Recorder; Mrs. Margaret Lantz, Treasurer; Chester Gates, Commissioner; Samuel J Offit, Circuit Court Judge; Paul Murphy Commissioner; George P. Dickmann, Prosecuting Attorney; Thomas Harper, Assessor; Ora Nicholson, Surveyor; Lester Haines Commissioner; and Armin Kleiman, Sheriff. Commissioner Dickmann was sworn in by George F. Dickmann who served as Prosecutor thirty years earlier.

I don't care if you're a Republican or Democrat after the last election you will agree that politics makes the world go around. Former representative Ray Richardson tells, " When I came to Hancock County in 1962 the population was 27,000 to 72,000 today. The County voted for democrats, but republican could be elected. During those days Sugar Creek Township was one precinct and it was democrat. There are nine Sugar Creek Township precincts, and they all vote republican. Richardson adds, "Republicans spent a lot of time going door to door to register them because we knew that most of them would vote republican. Registration was so successful that in 1974 was the last year that Republicans lost a contested election. If it wasn't for Watergate, we wouldn't have lost then. Bob Bernhard was a precinct committee man for 48 years he remembers attempting to drive one older lady to the polls and she wouldn't go because she didn't think women should vote. Women were finally allowed to vote in Indiana.

Berry Hurley was a republican mayor of Greenfield from 1964-71. On election day he lost in the primary to Richard Pickett. Berry had bought an expensive incinerator which would burn plastic In 1975, 1979, 1985 and 1987 Hurley ran again. Keith McClarnon was the beneficiary of Berry's elections efforts and served as the democrat mayor of Greenfield for many years. McClarnon became the longest serving Mayor of Greenfield, and everyone liked Keith.

"It is fine that old Hancock County
Has seen fit to take from its bounty
For bringing the third and second floor
So, near the entrance door..." Author unknown.

Enough I have told you everything that I know and some things I don't. Talk to me at jskvarenina@hotmail.com or the Daily Reporter.

2023-05-19

By Joe Skvarenina

Friend and fellow historian John Rasor likes to identify the sites of old buildings and businesses in Greenfield, a sort of above ground archaeology, see if you agree with some of his findings. The current Donut Shop on Main was once Crider's Drive Inn, do all you oldsters remember cruising Crider's?; Nash Metro Dealer was located at Franklin Rd and Rte. 40 at the Pool Sales; Sun Glo Gas was located on McKenzie and State Rte. 9 on the northwest corner; Simmons and Corey's on Rte. 40 were one time gas stations; Angus Inn was at the current location of Mueller's Auto Body; Pizza King on West 40 was once Standard Foods; Pizza King Parking Lot was Andis Motors; Christian Chevrolet was at the site of Community Corrections; McCullers Meat Market was at McKenzie and State Rte. 9, southwest corner and Riley Park Tire was once an Interurban Barn, and the tracks are still in the building.

Greg Murphy Writes, "I came across this article published by the Hancock Democrat, March 4, 1937, regarding the Linco Service Station, located on the property of the Lincoln Inn, West Main St. (U.S. 40). Harry Comstock, the new distributor of Linco Gasoline in Greenfield, was the former sheriff of Hancock County from 1925-1929... I remember some confusion as to where the Linco Service Station was located. I do remember the Lincoln Inn; dad managed the Pure Oil Station across U.S. 40 from the Lincoln Inn. However, I don't recall the Linco Station at all." Do any of you remember the location of the Linco Service Station?

Harry Comstock purchased the Otto Rettig Oil Company in 1931. The Comstock and Shelby Oil was formed and distributed Linco Products for the Ohio Oil Company around Greenfield. He was assisted by Harold Worland who will drive the tank truck around rural communities. Bill Kiger will assist at the retail outlet. The Lincoln Inn Restaurant will be operated by Mr. and Mrs. G.H. Smith.

Enough. I have told you everything that I know and some things I don't. Talk to me at sjkvarenina@hotmail.com or the Daily Reporter.

2023-05-12

By Joseph Skvarenina

I spent the day with Jonathan Levering, his dad Rich and Mike Adam exploring the possibility of an Indian trading post along an old road on the Coffin Farm in Blue River Township. There was definitely a road because it was a graveled path and its clearly definable

Jonathan Levering wants to know " if anybody has any knowledge of a road that used to run through the old Coffin farm in Blue River Township? The road ran from the intersection of 450 S. and 700 E. to 500 S. and 600 E. I understand that it curved through the Coffin farm and forded across Nameless Creek well into the 20th century. Part of the old road is still obvious today where it has been maintained by the landowner. I would also be curious to know if there was a small town or trading post along this stretch of road because there is very old concrete visible in one area along the side of the old road. Any information would be appreciated." The Coffin farm has a very old log cabin on it and early pioneers say there was a very large Indian village on it and one time.

Early pioneers in Hancock County had a hard scrabble existence. Elihu Coffin came to Blue River township in Hancock County in 1831. According to the Binford History of Hancock County, there were no roads, and the forest was yet to be cleared with many wild animals to exterminate. For weeks at a time settler had to do without bread since the mills were frozen in the winter months and there were no steam mills for grinding. Coffin and others during the winter month lived on potatoes, pumpkins and wild game. Another early settler Harmon Warrum tells, " I was born in 1819 and when I was four years my father moved to Hancock and settled on the Blue River." He goes on to tell we settled on first piece of land entered in Hancock County on August 10, 1821, and the last January 16, 1854. According to Warrum, Blue River was dense wilderness for miles and miles with no sounds but the rustling of the trees, the moaning of the wind, the angry voice of a storm cloud with the buzzing of the mosquitoes and the fierce noises of wild animals. In those days neighbors were eight to ten miles away. Primitive Cabins were made of rounded logs. The first fireplace and chimney were made of rocks, mud and sticks. There was an abundance of venison, but it was difficult to procure salt to preserve it. That is when jerking came into use. In the early days they had to go to Richmond to get salt.

One pioneer when moving to Blue River Township crossed a small stream flowing south. When he asked the name of the stream he was told, it had none to which the name of Nameless Creek was applied which sticks to this day.

Enough. I have told you everything that I know and some things I don't. Talk to me at jskvarenin@hotmail.com or the Daily Reporter.

2023-05-05

Cooper Family

By Joseph Skvarenina

Mr. Richard Cooper shares this wonderful family store with us. I share it with you in its entirety. I am sure you will enjoy it.

"In your last email you asked me what I know about Melissia Cooper. The answer is "not much". I assume you mean Melissa (Hoel) Cooper. She was the daughter of George W Hoel and Catharine (Hooper) Hoel. She was married to Dr. Berry Willis Cooper. I have a note somewhere that she donated land in Greenfield for the Carnegie Library. She is buried in Park Cemetery in Greenfield. You can find a picture of the lady and some family history at findagrave.com

You also asked if I had any Cooper family stories that you might be able to use in your newspaper column. This is a story that I found interesting and you are welcome to use it. I acquired a letter written many years ago by my grandfather's sister, Maude (Cooper) Fisk. Maude was born and raised on the Cooper family farm north of Maxwell, actually just north of Cooper's Corner (SR9 and 600 N) in Hancock County. In it she wrote about her memories of her youth and stories she was told. The following story was told to her by her grandmother, Jemima (Cass) Cooper. As to accuracy, the story took place almost 20 years before Maude was born and almost 95 years before she wrote it down.

It was at the close of a day in the summer following the Civil War. My grandfather and the two hired hands were out in the front yard cooling off before going to bed. In the stillness of the evening, they heard a vehicle of some type coming down the pike. By the slow plop plop of the horse's feet and the creaking of the wheels, they knew it was no neighbor, and while they were speculating as to who it might be, there appeared out of the dusk of the evening a black family, a man, his wife, and two children. As they neared the front of house the horse staggered, fell, and died during the night. The whole family cried. They were on their way to relatives near Chicago. They were from Kentucky and had no money to go on. The father begged my grandfather to let them stay and build a cabin on his farm, saying he would work at anything that needed to be done. There were no black folks near at the time. My grandfather hesitated for a while but finally gave his consent for him to do so. The man built a large one room cabin across the road, far back in the woods. He was honest, hard-working and respectful. At log rolling's, barn raisings, corn husking's, and thrashings, big dinners were the order of the day. The man brought his own and ate in the yard. He did his work well and asked no favors. He stayed on for a number of years. His wife was noted as a good cook. While helping to drain Swamp Creek he contracted malaria fever and died. He is buried in an unmarked grave in Cooper Cemetery on 600 N. His wife and children went back to Kentucky.

Here is additional information that you might find interesting. Maude's grandfather was James William Cooper, my second great grandfather. He was drafted into Company B, 9th Indiana Infantry, in February 1865. At the time he was a 39-year-old farmer with a wife, Jemima, and

five children. While in camp near Nashville, Tennessee, he contracted chronic pleuritis (probably tuberculosis) and was sent to an army hospital in Nashville. He was later transferred to an army hospital in Indianapolis before being discharged from the army in September 1865. His health was ruined, and he died in 1869 and is buried in Eden Cemetery. Jemima finally received a widow's pension of \$8 per month in 1883. I read that about 620,000 men died in the Civil War. I wonder how many more, like James, died in the years following the war as a direct result of their service in the war."

Thank you, Mr., Cooper. Enough. I have told you everything that I know and some things I don't. Talk to me.

2023-04-28

The Black House

By Joe Skvarenina

Jennifer Schlagenhaft Carroll writes, "I am a military history student working in collaboration with the D-Day National Monument on their Faces of the Fallen project. The project's goal is to find some information and a photo of every soldier who tragically died on D-Day.

We are trying to find some information and a photo of Corporal William B. Evans who is buried in Greenfield with his wife, Edna Stant Evans, and their son Doyle Wayne Evans who passed away in 2008. William served in the 502 PIR with the 101st Airbourne and died in France on D-Day.

I have already contacted the local historical society, but if anyone has any information or knows the family that would be amazing" Does anyone have information.

I had several neighbors comment to me on the plan to subdivide the Black House property into four lots. As Hancock County Historian I would believe that would be very unfortunate from the standpoint of the historic significance of the property. The Black house is a cultural treasure. Anything done to diminish its grandeur, by building four houses on the property, is very unwise.

Did you know that Black house, 222 Douglas Street, was built in 1883 by an Italian and had 16 different kinds of wood in the inlaid dining room floor? It also had lovely details such as acid carvings in the door hinges. The old barn had been made into a magnificent art studio with walls which lifted up to let in light, shelves for holding canvases, and a fireplace with tall, backed seats. There was even a loft bedroom for napping. Unfortunately, an unscrupulous roofer roofed the barn for Tom Black backwards, so the ridges held water instead of releasing it. It ruined the barn and everything in it before Tom Black died. I'm glad the mulberry tree (which is the largest in the state, too, I believe) is still thriving.

Tom's brother Richard was an acclaimed artist and one of his paintings is in the Hancock Public Library. Tom was the youngest of the four Black children of Richard Alexander and Ione Brown Black. Mother was originally from Milton Indiana but had grown up In Greenfield and had attended local Greenfield schools. Ione had many friends in town including the younger brother of James Whitcomb Riley. She met her husband at a party given by Albert "Abe" New. He had moved to Greenfield and had worked in the offices of Benjamin Harrison in Indianapolis. Richard and Ione were married in 1884 in Aurora Indiana and returned to Greenfield where all their children were born in the house on Douglas Street. Father Richard was killed in a streetcar accident. The Black family is buried in the Greenfield Cemetery. James Whitcomb Riley spoke at artist Ricard Black's funeral.

Please save the integrity of the Black House.

Enough. I have told you everything that I now and some things I don't. Talk to me at jskvarenina@hotmail.com or the Daily Reporter.

2023-04-21

Tales of Morristown

By Joe Skvarenina

Bob Wortman, friend of Hancock and Shelby Counties and the honorary Mayor of Morristown tells us, The Morristown High School Alumni Association has always played an important role in the Wortman Family. Family members who have served as president of this organization are Lyall Wortman, Fred Myer, Bob Wortman, and Lisa Bridges. In the Wortman Family, Alumni Weekend has been a family holiday where everyone comes home for the banquet, whatever class reunions are being held, and stays for a family dinner on Sunday afternoon before heading back to their homes. Bob was president in 1957 and had two memorable events happen that year. Col. Harland Sanders was trying to get the Bluebird Restaurant to become one of his first franchises in Indiana, but owner Ted Cullen was reluctant to buy into this new product. Bob, through his friendship with Ted, became friends with Col. Sanders and asked him if he would like to show off his chicken by serving the alumni dinner that year. Col. Sanders worked all day in the kitchen himself to serve the dinner and it had so many favorable comments afterwards that Ted became a franchise for KFC. Unfortunately, the famed Blue Bird closed on December 17, 2022. No yet knows yet will go into the site. Rumor has a Family Dollar Store.

Wortman also shares with us the "Catalogue of the Public Schools of Morristown Indiana" published 1886-1887 sponsored by H.G. Wolf New Goods store for men, Women and children in Morristown. It carried women's jerseys, children's suits, lace curtains, plush cotton goods and seersuckers. H.G. Wolf was the proprietor and related to the Greenfield family. The President of the school board was Dr. J.G. Wolf and James M. Tyner was the Township Trustee. In the summer of 1883, a building was erect by a joint effort to the town and township to provide a graded school for the community. Ten businessmen made contributions to the construction of the building. According to the publication, ...pupils of both the town and the township might have the opportunity of attending it and receive instruction in graded work and take higher branches as may be prescribed in a higher course. This would have ended the one room schoolhouse in Hanover Township and Morristown. Topics in High School to be studied included: Algebra, Latin, Literature, Natural History, Composition, Declaiming, Physical Geography, and Botany. There were only the two years of high school in those days. The 1883 building no longer exists.

Enough. I have told you everything that at I Know and some things I don't. Talk to me at jskvarenina@hotmail.com or the Daily Reporter.

2023-04-14

Native Americans

By Joe Skvarenina

During the early days of settlement small bands of Indians often roamed central Indiana. They traded with settlers or trapped fur bearing animals to be used for trade. They often camped on land of local farmers while in the county. The old state road, the Centerville Road, ran east and west across the county before the completion of the National Road was a well-used route of travel for the Indians and some of the settlers were fearful, they would take children or cause other mischief.

Of all the townships, perhaps Sugar Creek has been most successful in recalling the lore of the Indians. The Delaware Indians had two villages within Sugar creek on the north side of US 40 just west of Philadelphia. Another village is on the land comprising Palestine Cemetery. The Indians had a corn field near the old part of the cemetery. Mr. J.N. Snodgrass tells in an article in "New Palestine History 1871-1971" that probably 200 Indians lived there and gave the name of their leaders as Wa-Wa-See, whose son was Tuck-Ohee. There was also a large Native American village in Blue River Township near the old Coffin Farm.

Another story is that there was a pond north of Gem that had a large rock with markings near its shore thought to be sacred to Native Americans. Local stories tell of Indians returning to the area to use the site long after Indians were gone from the area. Is the rock still there?

Jonathan Levering wants to know " if anybody had any knowledge of a road that used to run through the old Coffin farm in Blue River Township? The road ran from the intersection of 450 S. and 700 E. to 500 S. and 600 E. I understand that it curved through the Coffin farm and forded across Nameless Creek well into the 20th century. Part of the old road is still obvious today where it has been maintained by the landowner. I would also be curious to know if there was a small town or trading post along this stretch of road because there is very old concrete visible in one area along the side of the old road. Any information would be appreciated."

I wonder if it is the lost town of Petersburg or part of the Napoleon Trace which runs through the area? Let me know.

Enough. I have told you everything that I know and some things I don't. Talk to me at jskvarenina@hotmail.com or the Daily Reporter.

2023-04-07

The Beech

By Joe Skvarenina

A student writes, "I am an honors student at Indiana University East. I am currently doing a research project on the Old Beech Church in Carthage, Indiana. I have hit a dead end... I know that it was set up by African Americans in the 1800s, and the church was built in the 1840s. I've been to the church once, but it's only open one time a year... My stepdad told me about your articles in the Greenfield Reporter and suggested I contact you. If you could help me in any way possible that would be fantastic."

I have been down to the Beech Church once. It is currently owned by the African Methodist Episcopal Church, and I do believe that a service is held at the site one a year at the last Sunday in August. It is down a long lane and there are great blackberries growing at the site. It is a historical church. The building is a frame structure with two doors probably one for the men and one for the women with a potbellied stove in the middle and benches and a pulpit. This is the second church on the site at it was built in 1865. Originally it was called Mt. Pleasant and there was a lending library in the building from 1842 to 1864. It was open one day per month. The fee to belong was 25 cents. The Walnut Ridge Friends helped organize the library. It was normal for these types of settlements to be near Quaker communities

In the 1820's the Roberts family settled in the Carthage area with the Waldens and the Winburns from North Carolina and Virginia. The congregation was organized in 1832 and affiliated with the African Methodist Episcopal denomination in 1842. This makes it one of the first churches in the denomination and historically significant. When the settlements in Rush County grew too large, they moved to Hamilton County and established the Roberts Settlement.

Local genealogist Greg Murphy tells " I have done some extensive research on the Gates family and also the Jeffries family (Brian Jeffries ancestors). Macklin and Mary (TURNER) Jeffries came to Indiana in the early 1800's from Greenville County, Virginia. They lived in the Beech Settlement south of Charlottesville, in Rush County. At one time Macklin and brothers owned upward to 3000 acres of land. The Beech Settlement was primarily an African American population; however, Macklin and brothers Wright and Walker Jeffries were sons of Mourning Jeffries and an unknown white man. Mourning's parents, Andrew and Mary (DOLE) Jeffries were of mixed blood Occaneechi Indians. The book "Southern Seed - Northern Soil" documents many residents of the Beech Settlement.

Macklin and his wife are buried at Gilboa cemetery here in Hancock County, many of his children are buried here as well. I have been doing research for a friend from high school who descends from the Gates family and her maternal line also runs into the Jeffries family." If you had one drop of color in your blood you were not considered white.

Enough. I have told you everything that I know and some things I don't. Talk to me at jskvarenina@hotmail.com or the Daily Reporter.

2023-03-31

Hazel Moore Thompson

By Joe Skvarenina

Hazel Moore Thompson served as the Hancock County Recorder as result of her nomination and election by the Democrat party in 1929. It has been claimed that she was the first woman to hold such a local office and could be regarded as one of earliest to prepare the way for women in county and city offices in the area. But now there is a dispute on this record. Bob Wortman claims that his Grandmother Venice Davis served as Blue River Trustee prior to this date. Her husband Horatio was the principal of Westland High School at about this same time. Wortman was born in Blue River Township on August 29, 1931. I cannot verify the dates of Venice's service. Do you know when she was a trustee? Let me know. She and her husband worked as township leaders during their tenure, when they retired from the school they served as house parents at the Soldiers and Sailors Home in Knightstown. Blue River Township was the first to consolidate their system into one building. After a 1947 fire in Westland Jackson and Blue River consolidate their school systems.

In 1908 local teacher Ada New asked for a new schoolhouse the school board would not consent at first. Mrs. New was persistent, and a plain frame building was soon erected. It was called the Ada New School. Many local pastors also preached in the school on a Sunday afternoon. In 1915 there were thirty-two one room schoolhouses in the county. In 1947 East Greenfield School was abandoned as the last one room schoolhouse. After the decline of students in the East Greenfield School students were transferred to Riley School.

A change in the way people thought about public education caused much building activity. Many new schools were constructed in the period of 1900 to 1940 including a grade school in Brandywine Township in 1923, a school in Shirley in 1905 and Wilkinson in 1908 both in Brown Township. The Mt. Comfort School in Buck Creek Township was constructed in 1917 and the Eden School in 1922 by the Hancock Central School District. The Charlottesville School was constructed by the Jackson Blue River combined townships. The New Palestine School was constructed in 1919 by Sugar Creek Township. The Fortville School was built in 1938 and the McCordsville School in 1926 by Vernon Township. I wonder how many of these buildings are around today.

Enough. I have told you everything that I know and some things I don't. Talk to me at jskvarenina@hotmail.com or the Daily Reporter.

2023-03-24

Rock Garden

By Joseph Skvarenina

Jim Leisure writes, " I read your column quite regularly, but I admit I have missed some. When I was a young child, in the early to mid-70's, roaming around Greenfield on our bikes, we stumbled across a property just north of the hospital that was a bit overgrown with weeds and smaller trees. Once inside the brush, however, there was a rock formation built into several tunnels and various formations. Everyone just called it the "Rock Garden". It was obviously man-made and even had conduit tubes connected to electrical outlet boxes ran about, as if at one time it had electricity ran to it. By the mid-70's, it had fallen into some disrepair, with graffiti and various trash such as empty soda cans and cigarette butts strewn about. It is now gone, but upon thinking about it recently, I began to wonder what it really was in its heyday. Was it some sort of attraction or meditation spot? Or was it just an elaborate playland that some talented father created for his children? I am just curious about a long-gone gathering spot that still lives in my memory."

On the north edge of Greenfield, a couple built a fantastic rock garden with a waterfalls and exotic plants for their enjoyment. L. E Harker and his wife began building the rock garden in the 1920's. He also raised peonies to the north of his house on North State Street in a field that covered most of the property to McKenzie Road. Also the flowers covered most of Holiday Park. In 2001 it was removed to expand the parking lot at the Head Shop. The Harker House was the Head Shop. My daughter when she was young, and her friends also played at the site. Good times for all.

Enough. I have told your everything that I know and some things I don't. Talk to me at jskvarenina@hotmail.com or the Daily Reporter.

2023-03-17

David Pasco

By Joe Skvarenina

As you probably who know Dave Pasco recently passed away. He was a community spirited individual who did much for the town. His time was too short on this earth and condolences to Janice, his wife. He will be sorely missed by all that knew him. For many years his family operated the only funeral home in town. In 1912 Chancey F. Pasco (1880-1953) came to Greenfield and bought the C.W Morrison Funeral establishment at 27 Main Street, It was a store front and now is the empty lot beside Grigsby Station. I believe the Hancock County Historical Society has the concrete slab from in front of the door designating the Morrison business site. Funerals in those days took place in the home. In 1926 he purchased the M.C. Quigley House at 312 E Main Street and after extensive remodeling opened his establishment at this site. This was formerly the community foundation office. Chancey brother John was his partner In Pasco Brothers in those early days

Chancey came to Greenfield from Evansville. While in Evansville he enlisted in the army on September 26, 1899, and he was a veteran of the Philippines Insurrection landing at Manila December 28, 1899. He saw his first skirmish on February 12 in which one man in his unit was shot. On February 22, according to Pasco, " We took a hike and drove the enemy from their trenches and chased them several miles and killed several..." There is a photo of Chancey in uniform at Stillinger's

Chancey's son Charles was the third generation to go into the family business. After graduating from Greenfield High School in 1932 and from the Indiana College of Mortuary Science in 1935, he joined the family firm. He became the head after his father's death. In the 1940's he also ran an ambulance service. Charlie was proud in bring his sons, Dick and Dave, into the business.

Dave was involved in Regreening Greenfield, Sertoma and the Hancock Health Foundation plus many other charitable endeavors. Good buy old friend. I have told you everything that I know and some things I don't. Talk to me at jskvarenina@hotmail.com or the Daily Reporter.

2023-03-10

By Joe Skvarenina

Michael Weaver is looking for information about a house at 523 W. Main Street. It is the Ferdinand and Margaret Kiefer House. It was built in 1870 and the Architectural style is Eastlake. The land was first granted to John Wingfield and Benjamin Spillman by John Quincy Adams in 1827. Wingfield sold it to Jared Chapman who sold it to Morris Pierson for \$75. Morris Pierson sold the property to the Junction Railroad who sold it to John Carr for \$200. Carr sold it to Margaret Kiefer. Ferdinand and Margaret Kiefer were friends of the Riley family. Almond Kiefer, their nephew, and Reuben Riley served in the Civil War as officers. The older Almond was a mentor to James Whitcomb Riley. Some say that Kiefer shared poems and local legends with the younger Riley. Almond worked as a typesetter by day at the Hancock County Democrat and a stumble drunk at night. After Aunt Margaret died, Almond could not manage to keep the house and pay his debts. He sold it to Samuel and Sarah Gordan who sold it to James Boyd in 1901. Boyd was big into the gas boom around Greenfield. Boyd an industrialist he donated the Fairgrounds Hancock County to the community. What do you know about 523 W. Main Street?

The boom in the gas industry was from 1887-1915. Gas was discovered in Greenfield on May 3, 1887. The first well was on West Fifth Street. After the initial discovery 43 gas companies were discovered in Hancock County. In 1888 it was estimated that one in thousand men were employed in gas related jobs. Greenfield offered gas as an incentive for businesses to locate in Hancock County.

In 1888 Greenfield was a gas boom town and had the industry to prove it. The industrial area was between Center Street and Pennsylvania Streets and along the old railroad tracks on Depot and Osage. Streets. In fact, the Old Home Stove company was in a building which the Indiana Box used until it burned down and now any empty lot at the site of the former Mitchell Fleming Printing. This building might have also been National Adjustable Chair Company. The Greenfield Bottle and Fruit Jar was built in 1888 at the site of the west side Hardees. In 1897 this site became the Hollowegard Reese Bottle Work and remained that until 1897 at that point the site became Owens Bottle Company. It was closed in 1913 and burned down in 1923. I have been told when they built Hardees, they found much glass scrap.

Enough. I have told you everything that I know and some things I don't talk to me at jskvatrenina@hotmail.com or the Daily Reporter.

2023-03-03

By Joe Skvarenina

The old Why Not Theater is on the east side of Courthouse once it housed the Patriot Insurance. If you go look at the building now you see the white lines at the top which trace the old roof line of the building. The building was built in 1919. The admission for going to a show was 25 cents except on Saturday when previews of upcoming programs and other serials were shown for 10 cents. A piano player provided exciting music for all the programs.

In some cases, the accompanist was local musician Earl K. Smith who wrote "Down by the Old Mill Stream." On the other side of the square was the Riley Theater of course named after the James Whitcomb Riley. George Foremen was the operator probably the projectionist. It was sold in 1919 by Ira Stephens to Maude Gates and her daughter Agnes. The building is currently McCleery's Sporting Goods. I have been told that the projection room still exists upstairs in the building. Also note how the building tapers to the back like a theater.

James Abner and Diana Abner are opening a real estate office in McCleery's, and James was wondering if anyone had a photo of the old theater. You can reach him at james@abnerrealty.com. I cannot seem to locate one.

It was at the "Why Not" that the movie the "Old Swimmin Hole" starring Charles Ray was first shown. This feature film shown many of the places in Greenfield like the Riley Home and the Old Brandywine. In 1921 Mayor Ora Myers declared March 7 and 8 Riley days and the schools dismissed early for the students to go see the show. City students saw it for free on Monday and county students for free on Tuesday.

In the early 1930's going to the show became a regular event in town. Mr. Howard Ellis manager announced that the thirty-five-cent admission would now be twenty-five cents on Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday. Balcony seats would be fifteen cents. Over the years the names of the Theaters in Greenfield changed. The one on the east side of the Court house became the State Theater. Both were used by local service club to treat young people to free Christmas parties. In 1946 Walter Weil built the Village Theater which is today's Ricks Theater.

Enough. I have told you everything that I know and some things I don't. Talk to me at jskvarenina@hotmail.com or the Daily Reporter.

2023-02-24

Trees, Cars, and Others

By Joseph Skvarenina

According to the Richman History of Hancock County about 1895, or possibly a year or two earlier, S. Morrison and Thomas Springer established a telephone factory at McCordville. A few years later they sold it to the Eureka Electric Company, of Chicago, who operated the plant until 1902 when it was sold to Luther Frost, Seymour Morrison, Frank Martindale, and others. The purchasers then incorporated under the name of the Columbia Electric Company and continued to manufacture telephones until 1905. In that year Luther Frost and others established the Leader Automobile factory, at McCordville, where the first Leader Automobiles were assembled. This plant was operated until 1907, when it was moved to Knightstown.

Margaret Scott writes about the early auto dealers in Greenfield, "My Dad Orville Nigh, had the dealership for Hudson Terraplane called "Nigh & Allen Motor Sale," The dealership was located across from the Old Library on North Street according to Ms. Scott. Wasn't Holt Motors also at the site?

Stringtown is a community along the National Road. At one time there was a blacksmith shop, sawmill and a foundry run at the site by Liberty Trees. Early autos were produced at the site. Liberty Tree wrote a book entitled "A True Story of Eighty Four Yeras a Busy Life" The whole book is in verse, "I have made boots and shoes, with old wooden pegs, And they were no low cuts, they came way up on your legs..." Trees tells there was only one log house standing in Wilkinson in 1870...But when the railroad came the town boomed. I visit there in 1881 there was flourishing places of business, elevator, hotel, restaurant and you could get plenty to eat and drink and not soft drinks either.

Who knows about Holt Motors I believe that it was Gant's Opera House and a livery stable before Holt Motors. In the 1950s, and into the 60s, the building on the southeast corner of North and State Streets I have seen photos of the Jeffries and Son Livery on the that corner. In addition, in 1922 the Greenfield City Directory shows a listing for O.H. Monger Ford, 25 North State which is the old address of the Ashley's Carpet site now gone. The site is now a parking lot.

Enough. I have told you everything that I know and some things I don't. Talk to me

2023-02-17

Charlottesville

By Joe Skvarenina

Mary Scott Gible shares with us a "Souvenir of Charlottesville Schools 1934". The Jackson Township Trustee Mr. Earl Binford 1927-1934 had it printed. It shows all the teachers and principals, graduates, janitors, and hack drivers for 1927 to 1934. Also, it has a poem "The Rose Tree" by Captain Lee O. Harris. It is unique and I have never seen one like it. Familiar names to me include Jackson, McClarnon, Scoot, Dudley and others. In the class of 1934, there was 16 graduates. Those graduates include (last names) Davis, Dent, Vandembark (twice), Kidwell, Stickler, Shields, Miller, Kinder, Moore, David, Scott, Hunt, Brooks, Richardson and Collins. It is unique because there are original photos in the book. It is a great resource for family research and eventually I will place it in the history room at the Greenfield Library. Stay tuned!

I recently came across a June 15, 1907, Jackson Township Commencement Program. The ceremony was held at the Methodist Church in Charlottesville. There were twenty-seven graduates. George Burnett was the township trustee which made him the chief school official in the township. and the teacher count was seven. I also came across a 1902 Commencement program for the Greenfield High School. it was held on North Street at the Gant Opera House. There were twenty-seven students and five faculty members counting the principal. Does anyone have a photo of the Gant's Opera House? I know the building was the old Holt Motors. It is interesting to note that Roscoe Thomas graduated from the 1902 Class at Greenfield was a faculty member at Jackson Township in 1907. One last find I came across was a Newcomers directory for Greenfield probably circa 1960. I enjoy looking into these types of directories to see the business community at the time. Cliff Fields was the mayor. For example, Forest Greenhouses on S. Meek Street, Greenfield Ice Cream, Ban Box Beauty Salon West Main Street, McCullers Meat Market, or Nay's Jewelry, and Andis Motors in the Weston Village area just to name a few.

Enough. I have told you everything that I know and some things I don't. Talk to me at jskvarenina@hotmail.com or the Daily Reporter.

2023-02-10

Go to Jail

By Joe Skvarenina

The Brady gang was in the Hancock Jail under Sheriff's Watson custody on a change of venue from Marion county. They were awaiting trial for the murder of a police officers and perhaps others. The Brady gang was notorious, and some claimed more dangerous than the Dillinger gang.

The break happened on Sunday morning. It was Sheriff Watson's custom to do the housekeeping of the jail cell. Watson had emptied the paper baskets from the cell, and he had opened the heavy door to put the baskets back in the cell. When he did that gang members Brady, Shafer and Dahlhoffer were eating breakfast with their back to the door. When Watson opened the door, Brady jumped up with a yell and threw himself into the door opening. Watson knocked him back into the cell and stepped inside to close the door behind him to keep them from escaping. At this point the other two convicts joined Brady. after some investigation it was later learned that the gang had succeeded in breaking a piece of iron from the cell and had covered it with a T shirt. Brady had struck Sheriff Watson on the head with the weapon when Brady and Sheriff were fighting to gain control of it. The other two convicts were doing what they could to prevent Watson from winning the struggle. Watson's sister, Edna Tinney, who was doing the cooking and the housekeeping, ran to Watson's office to get his revolver. She had just succeeded in opening the drawer of Watson's desk where he kept the revolver, and just got ahold of it when Dahlhoffer, who had followed her, threw her out of the way and took the gun. So as Watson and Brady were fighting down the hallway over the iron bar, Dahlhoffer came along and pistol-whipped Sheriff Watson. Watson and Brady fought down the hallway and rolled down the front steps and ended up with Sheriff Watson sitting on him and hanging on to the iron bar in the street in front of the jail. At that time Mr. and Mrs. Edgar Ridlen , owner of the Columbia Barber Shop, now the current site of the Greenfield Bank, drove by and saw the fight. He stopped to assist Sheriff Watson and he succeeded in knocking the gun out of Dalhoffer's hand but unfortunately it landed near convict who picked it up again. After a struggle he shot at Ridlen and the bullet went through his jacket lapel. There was another pistol whipping with the butt of the gun and the Sheriff was knocked unconscious for a short time. The gang escaped in Ridlen's car. After Sheriff Watson gained consciousness, he got up to the front door of the jail and told his wife to call the State Police.

This all happened at the 4th jail or the now prosecutors' office. This building is significant in the county's history. Enough. I have told you everything that I know and some things I don't. Talk to me at jskvarenina@hotmail.com or the Daily Reporter.

2023-02-03

In the Heartland

By Joe Skvarenina

Indiana Historian James Madison has written the seminal book on the Klu Klan called "The Klu Klux Klan, In The Heartland". In it Dr. Madison writes, "Our democracy demands we open all the pages of in the book of history." In doing this he examines many of the critical stories about the Klan in Indiana and the Midwest in the 1920's. Hancock County doesn't escape this examination of Klan members within the community, One such individual was Daisy Barr. Barr was a Friends preacher. In addition to Greenfield Barr served in congregations in Muncie, Lewisville, Fairmount and New Castle. She entered the Klan along with GOP politics in the early 1920's. She served as the first female Vice GOP Chair in Indiana. She was brought into the Klan by D.C. Stephenson. She was also active in the Women's Temperance Movement. She eventually went on to serve the national Klan movement. Barr told a group in Marion Indiana that if Christ were on the earth at the present time, he would have certainly joined the Klan. According to Madison's book, " Barr had an eye for the main chance when it came to fundraising- so much so that here enemies inside and outside the Klan accused her of keeping Klan collections for her own."...the anti-Klan editor of the Muncie Post-Democrat, was her must vicious enemy labeling her Daisy Doodle Barr." The Madison book is really worth a read.

Hinchman Hall and Wagon shop, 202 East Main Street, also served Klan purposes. The Daily Reporter tells us on May 23 & 24 1924 it was the site for entertainment for the local Klaven of the KKK. The film "'Toll of Justice" was being shown in the Hall with the doors opening at 6:30, 35 cents adult and 15 cents for children. Klansman were encouraged to bring their families. Also, around the same time and across the street the "Why Not" theater was showing D.W. Griffith's "Birth of the Nation". A flick which had a cast of 18,000 people, 3,000 horses and was on 18 reels. This film glamorized the role of the Klan in the country.

Enough. I have told you everything that I know and some things I don't. Talk to me at jskvarenina@hotmail.com or the Daily Reporter.

2023-01-27

Early Hancock County

By Joe Skvarenina

I like to read accounts of early travelers in Hancock County. It gives you good perspective of what the area looked like in the pioneer days. Mr. J. Gould wrote articles about his travels in Indiana in 1839. The book "Travel Accounts" by Shirley McCord tells he left New England in May and returned in August. His recollection was taken for the New England Farmer magazine June 3 through June 10th about his travels in Indiana. He says, "purchased a horse and wagon I left Richmond in the company of a friend. and following the Cumberland Road (Rte. 40) we crossed the river on a handsome stone bridge and passed through Centerville, Germantown, Cambridge City (at that time the county seat) and Dublin...After passing Dublin the land is more flat and there are fewer clearings and the road for the most part is extremely bad...passing Lewisville, Ogden and Raysville, we came to Greenfield...the road we traveled over was execrable. At all the creeks there were steep precipitous banks of hard clay which are really dangerous. I was twice thrown out of my wagon...and at many places I dared not ride at all. Many of the streams are deep and muddy, and most of them were entirely without bridges. The country is very flat and low so water cannot pass off, but stands in pools, sometimes miles along both sides of the road until it evaporates. The water of the wells has a strong Sulphur smell, and the grasses soon become corroded: our horses refuse to drink it unless thirsty. Greenfield is a small town of about 30 houses, a neat courthouse (this wouldn't have been the current courthouse built in 1896), two taverns and several stores. We left early the next morning and found the road similar to the one we traveled over yesterday until we came within 2 or 3 miles of Indianapolis, when we came to a district a little more rolling and dry."

When Hancock was first organized the area was wet and swampy and there were about 400 settlers living in the Hancock in 1828. The area was unbroken wilderness with numerous Indians along with wild deer, rattlesnakes, wolves and other critters. The swamp provided excellent hunting grounds for the Indians. The first road was the Napoleon Trace which extended through Blue River, Jackson, and Green Townships.

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2023-01-20

Lincoln in Hancock County

By Joe Skvarenina

In the first Lincoln campaign, Hancock County voted for Stephen Douglas for President. In 1864 Lincoln carried Hancock County. In 1866 the democrats became successful in Hancock County and remained so for some time. In 1855 Blue River Township was 75% republican and the most republican township in the county. In the 1880 Presidential election Blue River township was Republican by 68% with 175 voters. In Center Township the same year the vote was 582 democrat and 429 republicans. In Buck Creek Township in 1880 there were 166 Republicans and 178 democrats. 14 Apr 2015 was the 150th anniversary of the assassination of President Abraham Lincoln. It wasn't until last Friday that I learned about the connection between the Lincoln Funeral Train and Greenfield through an article in National Geographic. Yes, the Lincoln Train did pass through Greenfield and Charlottesville with both passings being recorded in the Richman History of Hancock County. After elaborate ceremonies were held in Washington D.C. the Lincoln Funeral Train departed the nation's capital on April 21, 1865, and finally arrived in Springfield on May 3, 1865. The actual funeral was held in Springfield on May 4. The train had traveled through seven states, 180 cities and had gone 1654 miles in some cases tracing Lincoln's original inaugural route. It passed through Greenfield on April 30, 1865, at the early morning hour of 5:55 A.M. It was traveling 20 miles per hour for people to have the opportunity to view the casket. On April 30 the Lincoln Funeral Train entered Richmond Indiana at 3 A.M. and stopped to pick up Governor Oliver P. Morton and other state dignitaries. It was estimated that 12,000 to 15,000 people were at the Richmond station and church bells all over the city rang to pay homage to the deceased president. At 3:41 A.M. the train arrived in Centerville and went on to Germantown, Cambridge City and Knightstown. At 4:27 A.M. it arrived at Dublin where the entire community came out to show their respects. From there the train entered Hancock County and journeyed to Charlottesville where many African Americans gathered at the tracks to grieve their slain leader. The remains of President Lincoln passed through Greenfield on April 30, 1865, at 5:55 A.M. on a dismal, cold day. Many citizens from all parts of Hancock County were at the depot hoping to catch a glimpse of the coffin in which the martyred President lay. Prior to its arrival a young veteran had read Lincoln's Second Inaugural address. But the train didn't stop, so all people noticed was the railroad cars draped in black crepe looking very somber. People couldn't see the casket because of the train's small windows, but it didn't matter since everyone was weeping at this point. Lincoln was not always that popular in Hancock County. During his first presidential race Stephen Douglas carried Hancock County. In the 1864 presidential election Lincoln did carry Hancock County under the Union Party banner. According to the Binford History of Hancock County 209 residents died in the Civil War. Hancock County had its share of Union brothers, cousins, and nephews spilling blood against their Confederate counterparts. But in the end when the fall of Richmond Virginia and the surrender of Robert E. Lee was announced, an issue of the "Hancock County Democrat" gave the following description . . . "Bells were ringing, bonfires were built, powder was fully used, and all the business of the day was suspended."

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2023-01-13

96th Regiment Company A

By Joe Skvarenina

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But Greenfield men and women participated in both sides during the Civil War. The 96th Regiment Company A from Greenfield was mustered into service with the Union Army April 22, 1861, for three months of duty by Louist Morris in Indianapolis. They were reorganized for three years of service between August and September 1861. They were part of Major General George B. McClellan's Department of Ohio. Familiar Greenfield names included Carr, Teague, Andis, Morford Curry and Tyner. They fought in the battles of Shiloh, Stones River, Chickamauga, Lookout Mountain, Missionary Ridge, Kennesaw Mountain, and the Siege of Atlanta. Eventually the 96th became the 99th Regiment. which was reorganized at South Bend. It was mustered out Sept 20, 1865. 19 of these men who were killed in action are buried at Grafton National Cemetery in West Virginia, and 22 at Shiloh National Cemetery in Pittsburg Landing Tennessee.

Do you have a Civil War veteran in your family? Tell me about it. Enough. I have told you everything that I know and some things I don't. Talk to me at jskvarenina@hotmail.com or the Daily Reporter.

2023-01-06

Goodings

By Joe Skvarenina

The Gooding Tavern was located at the corner of State and Main Streets on the site of City Hall. In the 1920's the Tavern was demolished. The Gooding Tavern had many famous visitors including former President Martin Van Buren and Henry Clay. Joseph Chapman began the structure in 1832 with later additions being added by Asa Gooding. For many years Gooding's wife Matilda ran the early hotel. To the right of the hotel was a depot for the Indianapolis, Greenfield Traction Lines Other famous Gooding's include David Gooding who was appointed as the United States Marshall for the District of Columbia from 1866 to 1869. he was wounded in Morgan's raid in Indiana. Another family member was Civil War General Paul Gooding who distinguished himself in the 1864 Red River campaign. Also, William H. Gooding was mustered into the service 10/2/1/1862 at Greenfield Indiana by Captain Reuben Riley. He served in the 8th, 90 and 71 Regiments. The 90th Regiment, Company G, 5th Calvary. The 5th Calvary lost one officer and 40 enlisted men in combat and 1 officer and 188 enlisted men from disease. The 5th was initially stationed at Newburg Indiana and was involved in chasing Confederate Morgan Raiders. The 5th was involved in 22 battles and skirmishes. During June 1864 it was involved in skirmishes every day. During its tenure it marched 2400 miles and was transported over 1000 miles of water. During its time the fifth captured 640 confederate prisoners'. William H. Gooding was a private.

The Gooding Tavern was located at the corner of State and Main Streets on the site of City Hall. In the 1920's the Tavern was demolished. The Gooding Tavern had many famous visitors including former President Martin Van Buren and Henry Clay. Joseph Chapman began the structure in 1832 with later additions being added by Asa Gooding. For many years Gooding's wife Matilda ran the early hotel. To the right of the hotel was a depot for the Indianapolis, Greenfield Traction Lines Other famous Gooding's include David Gooding who was appointed as the United States Marshall for the District of Columbia from 1866 to 1869. he was wounded in Morgan's raid in Indiana. Another family member was Civil War General Paul Gooding who distinguished himself in the 1864 Red River campaign.

It is interesting to note that George Knox was a barber in the Gooding Tavern. In his autobiography George Knox looks back at life in early Greenfield. Knox became a successful barber in the Gooding Tavern Building. Knox was a civil war veteran, a former slave and later an influential black newspaper editor. Knox was born in Tennessee. In 1863 he crossed to the Union lines to become a mule driver and eventually he worked his way up to published of the Freeman newspaper. In 1865 he opened his barber shop. He made friends with Riley who painted the shaving mugs in his shop.

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2022-12-30

Indiana Knitwear

By
Joe Skvarenina

Indiana Knitwear was established as Indiana Rayon on July 31, 1930, with 130 employees. Its address was 230 Osage Street, and currently the building is still in existence. In 1972 Indiana Rayon changed its name to Indiana Knitwear. It hadn't used Rayon for 25 years. At this point it was the manufacturer of National Football League and National Hockey League ware for Walmart, Loga Athletics, and Sears. Knitwear was manufacturing 4,200,000 garments per year.

In 1976 Pauline Crider was honored for 40 years of service.

In 1981 Indiana Knitwear honored 29 employees at an awards luncheon. Anna Spegal received of a gold watch for 45 years of service, Irene Colley and Mary R. Bennet for 30 years, and Grace Stevens for 25 years, WE Garrison, Lorraine Plank Beulah Shepherd for 20 years, Don Prange, Faye Mc Ginnis, Betty Jackson, Patty Dobbs, Dorothy Collier for 15 years, Mary Becroft, Brad Couron, Phyllis Jane Marie Mullins, Linda Shue ten years, and Debbie Cain, and Eleanor Estes, Charlene Godain, Diana Gross, Carol Hendershot, Sue Carter, Katherine Rains , Slyvia Rhodes, Bob Sells Dennis Sheet for 5 years. Knitwear President Leonard Berkowitz and Vice President Pete Hartwell handed out the awards. A friend of mine told me his grandmother worked there and as a kid she would bring home the seconds for him to wear.

In 1993 Knitwear applied for a tax abatement from the city of Greenfield for a storage building and equipment. There were now three plants nationwide with 223 employees. Don Weirich Vice President of Manufacturing asked approval to proceed on construction while the abatement was in approval process. It was granted. In 2016 Indiana Knitwear dissolved. In 2020 Keller Development from Fort Wayne asked Planning Commission Approval to build work force apartments at the site. The Korbyn Street Apartments would consist of two buildings with 48 two-bedroom apartments worth 8.7 million. Why did Indiana Knitwear dissolved?

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2022-12-23

Merry Christmas

By Joe Skvarenina

Where is the German community located in Hancock County? According to the Zion Lutheran Church history, the original German community was located generally highway 40 to the north and Highway 52 to the south, 500 West on the east and 800 West on the west. The German Lutherans who came into the area emphasized education so that their children could be literate learn the Lutheran religion along with the German traditions and language. Public school was not built in New Palestine until 1884. At first the church Pastor served also as a teacher. In the 1860's a Mr. Lahusen was employed as a teacher. In those days it was custom for the teacher to "Board Around" living with the members a week at a time. One day he asked Pastor Kunz if he would be able to substitute for him. The Pastor willingly agreed. A few days later Mr. Lahusen disappeared as did the money he borrowed from the congregation members. Pastor Kunz took over the teaching responsibilities at this point or until 1879.

In 1880 the Richman history of Hancock County tells, "To the German Lutherans, the house that had been dedicated to the worship of God is a sacred place. For this reason, they will permit no meetings to be held in the church except regular services and business meetings for the administration of the affairs of the church. A little story in the Hancock Democrat tells," At the German Lutheran Church under the superintendency of Rev. J.C. Kunz, the Christmas tree and the appropriate declamations and the Christmas songs and the extra-large amount of presents on the occasion, was surely the greatest affair ever exhibited in Hancock County. This congregation is the most numerous in membership and wealth, and the members are very liberal in their donations for church and school purposes and have celebrated Christmas in the greatest manner imaginable, which would have credited to a metropolitan city as it is much credit to the church and its worthy minister and will bear imitation..."

Zion is presently restored their old cemetery where the first Pastor is buried. If have family down the Zion way you might consider visiting the spot.

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2022-12-16

Hancock Central

By Joe Skvarenina

On August 1, 1955, Eden and Maxwell Schools were consolidated and Hancock Central School began operation in September. The upper six grades occupied a building in Maxwell and the elementary grades were in the Eden building. If you go to the Eden building today, you will find the cornerstone and the stone from the front entrance on a hill in the parking area.

The first years was not easy for the lifetime rivals. This system or Hancock Central lasted for 14 years. The first school board had three out of five members from Green Township. These board members were Marion Jackson, Thomas Butcher and Gene Pope.

The school had always been a vital part of th Green Township community. Neighbors in this community always gathered together at basketball games and class plays and Christmas programs and to discuss problems at the PTA. Some say that consolidation took away some of the community closeness.

In 1969 the Greenfield Central Community School Corporation was approved by voters by 1294 to 1211. Center Township outside the City of Greenfield and Green Township voted against the consolidation 5 to 1. To some bigger is not better. Hancock County Central Panthers has a Facebook page..

Enough. I have told you everything that i know and somethings that I don't. Talk to me at jskvarenina@hotmail.com or the Daily Reporter.

2022-12-09

Cooper

Joe Skvarenina

Richard Cooper writes, "I have quite a bit of information on the early Cooper families in Hancock County. Elijah S. Cooper was a son of Lewis and Mary Ann (Waters) Cooper. He was born in 1804 in Kentucky and died in Hancock County in 1865 and is buried in Cooper Cemetery on Road 600 N. He and his family came to Hancock County in the early 1830's and settled north of Maxwell. Many of his family are buried in Cooper Cemetery. The area around the intersection of Road 600 N and State Road 9 was once known as Cooper's Corner. Ms. Klamm mentioned a Dr. Cooper. He would probably be Elijah's son, Berry Cooper. As a side note, Berry Cooper's wife Melissa donated the lot in Greenfield where the old Carnegie Library stands. As to my relationship to Elijah, I believe (but can't conclusively prove) that Elijah and my 3rd great grandfather, Vincent Cooper, were either brothers or half-brothers. Vincent was also an early settler in Green township."

Sue Baker's book tells us that the Cooper Cemetery is in section four located on south side of 600 North between State Road Nine and 300 East. In 1887 the surrounding acres were owned by Lewis Cooper, Melissia Cooper and the heirs of Robert Cooper. Today it is fenced in on three sides but the attractive wrought iron fence entrance with the name Cooper Cemetery which was there in the 1970's is gone.

In 1868, during the political campaign a band was organized of older and younger players called the Adelpheas. The band had good equipment, uniforms and a band wagon. James Whitcomb Riley was one of the players. Members included James Cox, William Davis, Ed Millikin, War Barnett, Thomas Carr, Jesse Millikan, Isaac Davis, John Davis, John Guymon, Fred Hanger, Emsley Wilson, Hiram Riley and John Riley. Quinn Johnson mayor of Greenfield at the time played the brass drum. The band stayed organized for 10 years.

Jacqueline Armstrong tells us Dr. Cooper's actual date of death is 2/1/1869 and he is buried in the Cooper Cemetery. Richard Cooper tells us that Elijah was born in Kentucky and died in Hancock County in 1865. His family came to Maxwell in the 1830's and settled north of Maxwell. Many of the family is buried in Cooper's Cemetery. The area around County Road 600 and State Road Nine was at one time known as Cooper's Corner. Elijah's Cooper son was named Barry and his wife Melissia donated the lot on which the Carnegie Library stands.

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2022-12-02

Advent of the REMC

By Joe Skvarenina

Following the end of World War II, much of the telephone facilities that had been installed at the beginning of the century had become obsolete. Capital for much needed upgrades was difficult to obtain. Under President Harry Truman, the Rural Electric Administration's loan program was expanded to include loans to telephone cooperatives. With the help and encouragement of the Hancock County REMC, the five community telephone companies began discussions about consolidating into a single telephone cooperative. About 1940, the Eden Telephone Company was renamed the New Eden Telephone Company. March 6, 1941, exhibitors displayed electric appliances at the 5th Annual Meeting at the Memorial Building, the Mt. Lebanon Ladies Guild served the luncheon and John T. Wilson was Program Manager. August 2, 1941, 3,000 people attended the REA show on the Scott farm in Jackson Township. People from Hancock, Rush, Shelby and Henry counties attended. There were educational exhibits by manufacturers and local merchants. Farmers were looking for electricity from plucking chickens to milking cows.

By 1944, the rural electrics found it advantageous to have a central voice in Washington, D.C., and organized the National Rural Electric Cooperative (NRECA). Today, NRECA is supported by 900 electric cooperatives nationwide including Ninestar. The NRECA currently offers a cooperative employee benefit program, lobbying, management training, tax legal environmental advice, technical economic research plus other areas. Maurice Woodward joined the Hancock County REMC Board in 1946 and was president from 1965 to 1976. He became involved statewide in 1986. He was a charter member of the Indiana Rural Cooperative Federal Credit Union. He was active for 20 years. December 5, 1945, Hancock REMC purchased 47 miles of line from Greenfield Power and Light for a cost of \$82,000. Hancock REMC increased the inadequate voltage of 2,300 to 7,300 volts within the 47 miles and replaced the transformers and made much needed improvements. March 6, 1947, Hancock County REMC's Barton Moses was the speaker at the Greenfield Kiwanis meeting. In 1947, the local REMC had a new location in the Miller Building. In May 1945, Hancock County REMC and other electric cooperatives issued a booklet with the rules for electric wiring in rural areas.

February 27, 1948, a new substation was approved for Mohawk. The load was split between Mohawk and Willow Branch. There was a display of electrical appliances in connection with the Lions Club Carnival at the REMC on North State Street. April 1, 1948, Hancock County REMC's Annual Meeting was held at the REMC Building and lunch was served by the Nameless Creek Ladies Society. November 17, 1949, REMC's Barton Moses was the speaker at the Brandywine Township Farm meeting. According to Moses, there were lines every 400 miles and few farms were not electrified. Also, there was new equipment for dairy farms' water systems. September 15, 1949, the third annual Hancock County Appliance Dealers Association meeting was held at the REMC with 18 appliance dealers being represented. October 28, 1949, Harry Truman signed HR 2960 amending the Rural Electrification Act of 1936 to provide for a rural telephone program.

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2022-11-25

Wilkinson Whites

By Joe Skvarenina

The events of 1916 help to tell the story of why America is like it is today. Theodore Roosevelt declined the Progressive Party nomination and Woodrow Wilson was elected as President, America struggled to keep its neutrality in Europe, the PGA met for the first time, Boeing flew its first plane and Indiana celebrated its centennial. Also, in 1916 Herbert "Herb" White, at 30 years of age, founded White Petroleum with one truck and one bulk plant at the site of the old Feed Mill on Main Street in Shirley. He had a wife Evalyn and a son, Keith. At the time fuel was delivered to the bulk plant by train. The Company's first gas station was built in 1919 and was located at the site of the current Shirley Town Hall and Gas America #2. This station is now known as the Shirley Marathon Food Center. In 1924 a second bulk plant was constructed in New Castle Indiana with one delivery truck. White Petroleum made rural deliveries at the time. In 1929, a bulk plant was constructed by Guy Reeves in Anderson. By 1924 White's had gas stations in Ogden, New Castle, Anderson, and Shirley. The service stations ran under several independent brand names such as Red Bird, Silver Seal and Gulf Oil.

Herb White was very community minded. During the "Great Depression" he converted his garage into a dining room and kitchen and hired Ethel Beeson to cook a hot meal for underprivileged children in Shirley who needed one. He also sponsored an independent basketball team, called the Wilkinson Whites from 1926 to 1931. In 1931 the team played Bedford at the state finals in Noblesville. Team members included Dale Johns, Harold Condo, Wesley Simmons, Steve Harlan, William Earl Record, Arlie Reger, Fred Smith, and a Mr. Ensinger. Herb White died in 1934 at the age of 48 and the business was sold or closed for two years. No one knows for sure.

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2022-11-18

George Washington Julian

By Joe Skvarenina

If you go to Centerville, you will see a state historical marker about George Washington Julian. He did practice law there. But he also had a Greenfield connection. He resided in the Gooding Tavern, the current location of the City Hall at the time. In the years from 1840 to 1890 he was a member of five different political parties. He took stands public land policy, women's rights, anti-slavery and Free soil, the labor movement, , the Radical Republicans, the Liberal Republicans, the settlement of the west, the Quakers, and the Unitarians. Julian served in the State Legislature, Congress, and was nominated for President at National Labor Reform Convention.

He began the practice of law in New Castle. After being forced to teach school to make ends meet, he moved west to Greenfield and began to practice law, but he got into conflict with one of the leading lawyers. So, his stay in Greenfield was short. Some say he had a contentious personality. In Greenfield he became friends with another local attorney George Pattison. Both men were timid and weak speakers. They intended to do something about it. They founded a club called the "Dark Lyceum" Pattison and Julian were the only members. The purpose of the club was to improve their public speaking and become more effective lawyers. The meeting was held in darkness where the two would debate issues of national or local importance in the dark and not be intimidated. he later started a "Dark Lyceum" in Centreville, but it was much larger.

Julian's Greenfield problems were soon solved in Greenfield when his brother Jacob suggested that they form law practice Centerville. Julian accepted this chance to escape Greenfield. In April 27,1843 letter George Washington Julian, referred to Greenfield as a place of moral outrage. Pattison had left Greenfield before Julian leaving him alone.

George Washington Julian died July 4, 1899, at 82 years of age.

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2022-11-11

Bruner Family, David Gooding

By Joe Skvarenina

Mary Todd Bruner was the first woman to practice in Hancock County. Born in 1855 she graduated from Earlham College in 1877 and Women's Hospital Medical College in 1885. She began practicing medicine in Greenfield in 1889 along with her husband. She served on the Board of Trustees for Earlham and was Chairman of the Board of the Children's Guardian Home. He was also a member of Greenfield Friend Church which was organized in 1899. She died November 1942.

Her husband Dr. Charles Keeper Bruner born in 1857, practiced medicine in Hancock County until his death in 1917. He served on the Board of Pensions Examiners for the Civil War Veterans and was a charter member of the Greenfield Library Board. Son Ralph Prescott Bruner was sent by the Society of Friends around 1918 to serve as a driver with St. John Ambulance Corporation in WW I as part of their support activities. The Bruner home and offices were on the National Road at the location of Pizza King in Greenfield.

David Gooding was born on January 20, 1824, in Kentucky. He came to Hancock County in 1826 or 1827. In 1836 his father began operating a tavern on the southwest corner of State and Main Street, the current location of the Greenfield City Hall. Famous guest in the Tavern included Henry Clay in 1844 (three-time presidential nominee) R. M. Johnson in 1843 (a former Vice President), and George Washington Julian, 1852 (candidate for Vice President and a Congressman from Indianapolis). In 1861 Gooding was elected judge. In 1862 he spoke at a Union meeting Charlottesville for three hours. In 1863 as a Union volunteer, he pursued General John Morgan through Indiana and was wounded. In 1864 he resigned as Judge and was nominated by President Lincoln to serve as Judge in New Mexico. But the nomination was withdrawn at Gooding request. In 1866 he was nominated for US Marshall in the District of Columbia. He served in this position until 1869. Gooding supported Tilden over Hayes in the 1876 election.

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2022-11-04

Bull Moose

By Joseph Skvarenina

Theodore Roosevelt was an activist President, and he loved the office. When he didn't receive the Republican nomination again, he bolted the party and started the Progressive or Bull Moose Party. Roosevelt had served the remainder of the McKinley's term after his assassination and one of his own had announced he wouldn't seek a second term. He subsequently left the country and went on safari and when he came back to the states, he didn't like how William Howard Taft ran the office, so he decided to run again, and the Republican convention denied him the opportunity. "Connections" the publication by the Indiana Historical Society tells us the story of James F. Reed who served as Chairman of the Hancock County Republican party beginning in 1910. In 1912 he left the party and became a Progressive, the same year the splinter group was founded. Reed ran for Hancock County Circuit Court Judge on the Progressive ticket in 1912. He lost the race. But he continued to be involved with the Bull Moose. In fact, the local group met in Reed's law office. Later in 1916 he returned to the Republican Party after the Bull Moose movement's efforts began to fade. Roosevelt successfully split the Republican Ticket and Woodrow Wilson became President. Reed died in 1935 at 78 years of age from a cerebral hemorrhage. He and his wife are buried in Park Cemetery. He was a successful attorney and attended Bradley Methodist Church. His house and office were on Main Street also.

Thanks to the Indiana Historical Society for publishing his diary and his important recollections. He recorded many Greenfield and national events in his writings including Pancho Villa's raid on Columbus Arizona. Enough. I have told you everything that I know and some things I don't. Talk to me by writing the Daily Reporter or jskvarenina@hotmail.com.

2022-10-28

Isaac Sanford Hampton

By Joe Skvarenina

Isaac Sanford was a barber in George Knox's shop in the Gooding Tavern. The Gooding also known as the Dunbar Tavern and was located at the current location of the City Hall. Mr. Hampton a Black man was listed as a mulatto in the 1880 census. He was married to Sarah Elsie Hunt, a daughter Of Irving Hunt who was a friend of James Whitcomb Riley. Hunt's cabin was near the Well House in Riley Park. He died in Indianapolis on March 27, 1913. His parents walked for North Carolina to Indiana in an early day. He served in the Civil War under Captain Henry Snow in the 28th Indiana in the final campaign under General Grant.

He obtained the rank of Private. He and his wife had eight children. He was a member of the Dunbar Post of the GAR which was in Greenfield. His funeral was held at the Second M.E. church the current location of Dave's Meat Market. On May 1, 1891, the Hancock County Democrat reported that he was arrested for gambling. Isaac and his wife lived at 424 South Street. He died March 21, 1913. Sarah died Jan. 25, 1935 at her home 2055 Boulevard Place Indianapolis. He received a Civil War Disability Pension of \$15.50 a month. He was accused of desertion but later acquitted.

Black families form North Carolina migrated to Greenfield after the Civil War and they were in some cases unwelcomed by the white population. The Indianapolis Daily Sentinel Reported on December 13, 1879 five families came to Hancock County from North Carolina and despite warnings they were given respite in a Quaker famers barn. The next day the barn was burned. Also, an older Black resident who also gave some lodging and found his horses throat cut the next day. Not all history is peaches and cream. You must take the good with the bad. But you have to learn from it. and not sweep it under the carpet. Harry Truman once said, "the only new history is what you haven't read."

Enough. I have told you everything that I know and some things I don't. Talk to me at jskvarenina@hotmail.com or the Daily Reporter

2022-10-21

The Good Ole Days

By Joe Skvarenina

The 1930's weren't the easiest times in Hancock County. The Depression, when it finally came to the community hit hard. No matter in what community that you resided, the children of the Depression, maybe your parents, should be considered unique. My dad was born in 1923 and had all the habits of a Depression baby. He saved every bit of string, tin foil, rubber bands, Christmas wrap (to be used again next year) and bent nails. As a child I remember having to straighten nails out for later use. Prior to the arrival of electricity, coal oil or commonly called kerosene was used to light and cook. Did you ever attempt to read by a dim kerosene lamp? Coal also provided heat for the house. My father said that he and the rest of the siblings would go to the railroad yard to look for coal that had fallen off the trains to take home for the furnace. In the 1950's, I can still remember my Dad banking the furnace at night. Some stations sold a combination of ice and coal. Burt Baker's old store across from Riley Park was at first such a business. Later the site was a Sun-Glo and a Speedway during the 1960's. The buildings on the site are long gone. My mother a child of the Depression would "put up" everything she got her hands upon including meat. The Mason Glass jars were invented in 1858 by John Landis Mason as an alternative to the tin can for preserving food which made home canning more practical. Thank heavens for Muncie's five Ball brothers who invented the screw on caps and gasket sealed tops. Summer and fall were seasons that people used to sustain themselves. Now I am a baby boomer, and you would think I wouldn't do all this stuff? I want store bought bread and grape jelly. But I still garden and we freeze now instead of can. I still drink sassafras tea. How about you?

On May 2, 1877 Mr. OS Tuttle traveled to Greenfield from Indianapolis after he closed his bakery at 2427 North Illinois Street. He seems that Mr. Tuttle was in poor health and he decided that he and his wife would go west. Mrs. Tuttle at the time was going to Decatur Illinois where she would meet her husband after his visit to Greenfield. After a week Mrs. Tuttle was concerned when her husband didn't arrive in Decatur. So, she reported him missing to the police. It was discovered that Mr. Tuttle had taken the wrong train to Dayton Ohio and the mystery was solved.

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2022-10-14

Stories Save the Barn

By Joe Skvarenina

Richard and Ann Moore Parker own a white barn on the corner of State Roads 9 and 234 in Eden. Their farm was declared a Hoosier Homestead on December 13, 1993. It was built by Ann's Grandfather Moore in 1868. They are concerned if a roundabout is built that it would take the historic barn. There are no nails, and it was built with wooden pegs. Thru years, the Barn has held many different animals. There sons and grandsons have shown sheep. The Indiana Barn Foundation was started to unite those who value the legacy of Hoosier Farms. In 2013 there were 20,000 wooden barns in Indiana compared to 30,000 a decade earlier. Indiana has more barns per square miles that all but five states. The wooden barn is an asset in Indiana's Cultural Heritage. The real question is if the Indiana Highway Department plans to save the barn.

Richard goes on to tell us that he and Jack Hite ran a grocery in Eden for the 1960's. Eden is the principle and probably only community still in existence in the Township Did you know that Eden once called Lewisburg was surveyed and platted on August 21, 1835, probably by John Alford. The community originally had thirty lots. Many small stores were conducted in the town over the years. Orville Baity was an early merchant. Lee Justice and Umbenbower and Fuqua were merchants in later years. One local, Ruthie O'Neal, writes " The Umbenbower's helped people in many ways...Harry converted his covered truck into a bus to haul kids to ball games, he stayed opened late so women and kids could visit by the big old stove in the back of the store until the game was out. In front of the store was a 'liars' bench. During fit weather it was in use all the time during the day and evening. "Fred Pope bought the store from Mary Umbenbower in 1936. People would come from Anderson and Indianapolis for the meat and the hand packed ice cream. Jack Hite and Richard Parker were the last owners of the store. The building still exists but I hear that the floor is gone.

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2022-10-07

Archaeology

By Joe Skvarenina

If I had to do it over again, I think I would become an archaeologist. TV shows on archeology fascinate me. The other evening the Greenfield Public Library had a speaker, Rachel Sharkey a research archaeologist with the Indiana Division of Historic Preservation and Archaeology. In the free booklet which she distributed it points out, "In general the Miami's and two of their subgroups or bands the Weas and the Piankashaws are geographically associated with the White River. The Potawatomis are recorded generally in the extreme northern Indiana above the Kankakee River....Kickapoos and Mascoutens appear in the 18 century in northwestern Indiana. Delawares are associated with Central Indiana and the Shawnees are further south long the Ohio River.

Hancock County was formed out of territory ceded by the Delaware Indians as part of the New Purchase in the Treaty of St. Marys in 1818. The State Legislature divided the land Jan. 22, 1820, into Wabash and Delaware Counties. Thus, the first Sheriff of the territory later known as Hancock County would have been the Sheriff of Delaware County. In 1823 Delaware County was divided into Madison and Delaware Counties. It was in 1824 one of the earliest crises took place. A group of white men seeing two Native American families with furs killed the entire party of warriors, squaws, and the children for their furs. Word spread and the entire frontier feared a massive Native American uprising. The Sheriff notified the Governor and the militia to help capture the men responsible and they were successful. The Sheriff raised some of the militia from the part of Madison which is now northern Hancock to guard the prisoners at the county seat which was Pendleton. A trial was held, and three of the four men were found guilty. This was the first time that white men were found guilty of murdering Native Americans and put to death.

The Delaware was the predominate Native American group in Hancock County. But some say the Shawnees were also in Blue River and Brandywine Townships. The Delaware Indians are members of an Algonkian speaking tribe who called themselves the Lenape or Lenni Lenape. The word Lenape standing alone means "Common People". Lenni Lenape means "Genuine Man" or "Original People" in the Delaware language. Delaware is not a Native American word, and they are the only ones to have a complete Anglicized name. It is derived from Thomas West, Lord de la Warr, an early Virginia colonial governor. Thomas, Lord de la Warr name was given to a bay and river, and it was later modified to Delaware. In 1806 William Anderson or Kikthawenund became principal chief of the tribe until his death in 1830. The city of Anderson is named after him.

When Hancock was first organized the area was wet and swampy and there were about 400 settlers living in the Hancock in 1828. The area was unbroken wilderness with numerous Native Americans along with wild deer, rattle snakes, wolves and other critters. The swamp provided excellent hunting grounds for the Native Americans.

2022-09-30

By Joe Skvarenina

Charles Gambrel want to know if Greenfield ever had a Studebaker dealer? I know over the years there has been many auto dealers in town. Hancock County was involved in the early history of the auto. But I don't know about Studebaker.

According to the Richman History of Hancock County about 1895, or possibly a year or two earlier, S. Morrison and Thomas Springer established a telephone factory at McCordsville. A few years later they sold it to the Eureka Electric Company, of Chicago, who operated the plant until 1902 when it was sold to Luther Frost, Seymour Morrison, Frank Martindale, and others. The purchasers then incorporated under the name of the Columbia Electric Company and continued to manufacture telephones until 1905. In that year Luther Frost and others established the Leader Automobile factory, at McCordsville, where the first Leader Automobiles were assembled. This plant was operated until 1907, when it was moved to Knightstown.

Margaret Scott writes about the early auto dealers in Greenfield, "My Dad Orville Nigh, had the dealership for Hudson Terraplane called "Nigh & Allen Motor Sale," The dealership was located across from the Old Library on North Street according to Ms. Scott. Wasn't Holt Motors also at the site?

Stringtown is a community along the National Road. At one time there was a blacksmith shop, sawmill and a foundry run at the site by Liberty Trees. Early autos were produced at the site. Who knows about Holt Motors I believe that it was Gant's Opera House and a livery stable before Holt Motors. In the 1950s, and into the 60s, the building on the southeast corner of North and State Streets I have seen photos of the Jeffries and Son Livery on the that corner. In addition, in 1922 the Greenfield City Directory shows a listing for O.H. Monger Ford, 25 North State which is the old address of the Ashley's Carpet site now gone. The site is now a parking lot.

Enough. I have told you everything that I know and some things I don't. Talk to me

2022-09-23

More on Wortman's Morristown

By Joe Skvarenina

Bob Wortman remembers Main Street in Morristown as he was growing up. On the North side of the street there was a McWilliams Carter International Harvester Implement dealership, Warren Zike's Hatchery, Dr. Elliott's dental office which had formerly been Frederick Gottlieb's Taylor Shop, the Gottlieb home, Truckers Haven Restaurant, Pickett Brother's Hardware, Glenn Howard's Pharmacy, Zike's Grocery, Zimmerman's Grocery, Morrison's pool room and barber shop, Pauley's Variety Store, The Bluebird Restaurant, Sutherland's Grocery, Kennedy's Barber Shop, a movie theater that became the Home Appliance Company, Furnas Ice Cream Store, and L V Hauk Funeral Home.

On the South side of Main Street was Dodds Hall, A.B. Gates Ford Dealership, Dr. Maisoll, Ripley Farmers Telephone Company, Mom & Pop's Restaurant, Jackson Sisters Nic Nac Niche, Chief's Shoe Repair, Dunn's Shell Station, Methodist Protestant Church, Rockway Café, Kroger Grocery, Union State Bank, two residences, United States Post office, Fire Department, the Carney residence, The Kopper Kettle Inn, Standard Service Station, and then Morristown High School.

Home Appliance was founded in 1945 by Lyall Wortman. Bob worked for his father from the start. This was a time when electric appliances were a new convenience. Bob helped install electrical service as we know it today in many homes for the first time. Customers were replacing coal and wood stoves that sat inside the house with furnaces in the basement. This was also the beginning of television and Home Appliance sold and serviced them. There were also many advancements being made in bathroom plumbing fixtures. The services supplied by Home Appliance Company, besides the products being sold were in high demand. After his father's death, Bob had enough experience to keep the business going. During the day Bob would work outside doing installations and service work in the plumbing, heating, and electrical trades and at night he would work at the shop, doing paperwork and preparing for the next day. Myrtle Gordon ran the store for the family for about twenty-five years during the day, handling the sale of large and small appliances, radios, record players, Nu Day paint and wallpaper. The company also did mechanical and electrical service for residential, commercial, and industrial customers. Eventually they would take on the Frigidaire line of appliances. Home Appliance Co. won a trip to the Seattle World's Fair for exceeding their quota that year. The next year, their quota was increased, but they were again at the top of the list in their class and received an all-expense paid trip to Hawaii. In 1974 Home Appliances was doing electrical work for Nabisco Corporation and could not get invoices approved because of the company name so it was changed to J R Wortman Co., to reflect Bob's given name of James Robert Wortman. After Jay graduated high school in 1972, he took on more responsibility for running the business. As Bob became more involved with starting Fountaintown Gas Co, Inc and building it up, he turned the company completely over to Jay. Six generations of Wortman's had worked in the company before it was sold in 2021.

Enough. I have told you everything that I know and some things I don't. Talk to me.

2022-09-16

Mayor of Morristown

Bob Wortman, the unofficial mayor of Morristown and its best booster has some great stories to tell.

Morristown, Hanover Township, was platted in 1828 by Samuel Morrison and is named after him. The Post Office was in operation in 1834. During WW II Morristown housed four hundred POWs who worked at seventeen different canning plants stacking cans, cooking tomatoes, peas, and corn. According to Wortman, Prisoners of war came to Morristown, mostly German but a few Italians, as a means of relieving a workforce shortage." They came from Camp Atterbury around 1944. Atterbury was a highly active army post at the time, and it became a prisoner of war campground. Wortman who was too young for military service at the time but remembers German laborers in the tomato fields at Morristown Canning Company and the Blue River Packing Company along US 52. Eventually they set up a camp on Paul Wolf's farm near the Asbury Cemetery. Local school buses transferred the workers to the fields. Paul Wolf who was Bill Wolf's father and Sarah Wolf's grandfather lived in Morristown and owned canning factories in Gwynneville, Arlington and New Palestine. The food that was being produced was used by the US Army. The prisoners often played soccer during work breaks and the residents would watch them play. If a ball were kicked to close to the fence the Germans would not retrieve it because of the armed guards. Paul Wolf, a WWI veteran, wrote about the prisoners of war in one of his "Johnny letters" sent to American soldiers from the area. These "Johnny letters" were formed of bits and pieces of letters sent to him by members of the armed forces from throughout the world. By the end of the war, he was mailing over four hundred fifty letters each month to his list of contributors. He described the Germans as good workers, ranging in age from sixteen to fifty who really relieved a workforce shortage. The stone gates designation of the Camp can still be seen.

Do you know how the Blue Bird Restaurant in Morristown got its name? It was originally the Morristown Confectionary and located in the east side of the current Fountaintown Gas Co., Inc building. When it was moved to its current location in the late 1920's by new owners Oscar and Zella Kinsey, it ceased being a confectionary and became a restaurant. There was a contest at the Morristown school to choose a name for the restaurant and Chase Webb was the winner producing the name Blue Bird. He got a prize of one dollar for his efforts. In 1945 The Blue Bird was expanded to the building on the west which had been a variety store originally founded by Mr. and Mrs. Albert Pauley, Jane Pauley's grandparents.

Enough. I have told you everything that I know and some things I don't. Talk to me.

2022-09-09

Robbery and Law Enforcement

By Joe Skvarenina

On October 1, 1885, the Hancock County Democrat reported a robbery on Monday night at the home of Elder W.F. Ackman. Burglars had entered the residence and had taken \$35 from Elder Ackman pants pocket. There was no clue as to who did the crime. It was thought that the crook entered the home and secreted himself away after family had gone to a camp meeting. The family was not disturbed during the night and when they arose on Tuesday it did not take long before the family realized that the home had been burglarized. The safe in the kitchen had been opened showing that the criminal helped himself to something to eat. The safe probably meaning pie safe. Elder Ackman now mourns without hope. Hancock County had both a sheriff and Township Constables.

John Foster the first Hancock County Sheriff was born in South Carolina in 1796 and migrated to Indiana in 1816. He was employed as assistant to the government surveyors for several years. In 1828 he came to Hancock County and settled in the Greenfield area and farmed. He was appointed Sheriff by the Governor in 1828. The county provided the first jail during his term. He served in the Indiana House of Representatives in 1838 and 1851. He was elected Treasurer of the county in 1854. Samuel Duncan was elected Sheriff in 1832. He was sheriff when the first jail burned down.

U.S. Jackson served as Sheriff from 1884 to 1888 when Benjamin Pauley was elected. Marshall Smith was to enter the office in 1896. Noah Spegal served 1896 to 1898. During his term more railroads were added to the county and better transportation brought in more people and industry.

The 1852 Constitution of Indiana provided for the election of a justice of the peace for four years and a constable for two years to uphold the laws in a township. This offered the opportunity for an inexpensive remedy to petty grievances either criminal or civil. The latter who served as executive officer and corresponds with the county sheriff in his duties.

Enough. I have told your everything that I know and some things I don't. Talk to me.

2022-09-02

McCordsville Telephone Company

By Joe Skvarenina

John Apple was president of the McCordsville Telephone Company in the prewar years when the company was suffering because of old poles, wire and other items. In those years, it was very difficult to obtain the necessary materials. In 1947, Mr. Apple was appointed to a committee which led to the five small telephone companies in Hancock County joining hands and forming the Hancock County Rural Telephone Company in November 1950. McCordsville, Maxwell, Mohawk, New Eden and Willow Branch telephone companies were now consolidated to form Hancock Rural Telephone Corporation ("HRTC"), a telephone cooperative. John was elected as one of the first directors and continued in that role until his death in 1975. He was instrumental in seeing the HRTC received an REA loan in 1952 for \$243,000 to rebuild the five phone companies into the Hancock Rural Telephone Company. REA Administrator, Mr. Claude Wickard and wife personally delivered the loan papers to Greenfield, on the way to his family farm in Delphi, Indiana. The directors of HRTC at the time were Maurice Woodward, president; Joe Steele, vice president; George Simmons, secretary-treasurer; and Ralph Fisk, Wilbur Hasler, Gerry Henry and Frank Apple, directors. During his visit, Mr. Wickard expressed his willingness to assist HRTC in any manner in its establishment since Washington had already signed the papers. Mr. and Mrs. Wickard were both very impressed by the REMC and the plant in Greenfield. John Apple saw the initial number of HRTC subscribers go from 800 to 3,300 members at the time of his death. Initially, the contract of building lines and installing equipment for some 900 subscribers in Maxwell, Eden, Willow Branch, Mohawk and McCordsville was given to Wiekel Construction Company of Fort Wayne. The cost was \$300,000. All new materials and equipment were to be used. HRTC would furnish all the equipment and materials needed while Wiekel would provide the labor in setting poles, stringing wire, and installing equipment. The telephones would all be dial type and automatic and would not need operators. There would be two outside trunk lines, one with Indiana Bell and the other through the Greenfield Office and hence to the outside. The office would be in the REMC building. In Greenfield, James Castell would supervise the construction. Later HRTC would become Ninestar.

Enough. I have told you everything that I know and some things. I don't. Talk to me.

2022-08-26

By Joe Skvarenina

History of St. Thomas Church

St. Thomas Catholic Church provides us with some information on their website about the founding of their church which today is a healthy and vital congregation. The construction of the Big Four Railroad, then known as the "Bee Line" in Hancock County, was indirectly responsible for the establishment of *St. Thomas the Apostle Parish* in Fortville. The railroad was completed in 1850 by laborers of Irish descent. In 1866, one of the first priests to take a deep interest in the new congregation was the pastor of St. John's Parish in Indianapolis. When the possibility of building a church arose, several suggestions were made that it be built in Woodbury, but it was eventually decided that Fortville showed more possibilities of growth. Ground for the church was donated by James E. Merrill in 1868 on the site of which the present church stands. In 1869, a frame church was built. In 1877, the Franciscan monastery in Indianapolis was given charge of the congregation. There was a Ladies' Altar Society, organized after the building of the church. Its purpose was to help with the purchase of altar linens, vestments and the cleaning and upkeep of the altar and the church. There was also a League of the Sacred Heart, organized in 1913, with the aim to encourage a greater devotion to Jesus and a closer union in prayer. In 1916, the parish, consisting of about 60 members, undertook the building of the present brick structure. Leaders of the parish, who also composed the building committee, were James Ganley, Lawrence Durrack, P.J. Kelly and Thomas Tobin. Local builder, Frank Crouch, built the new church and Brother Christopher superintended the construction. The cost of building the church was \$7,113.67. The frame structure was moved to Michigan Street and still stands as a residence. I know that the congregation is getting a new pastor and we wish them continuing success. I am reminded with Harry Truman's saying, "The only new history is the one you haven't read."

The oldest church in Vernon Township in Mt. Carmel Primitive Baptist Church south of town. Also a 1906 directory tells us that the largest Catholic Church in the county was Mother of God in Shirley with 400 members. It also tells us about the National Adjustable Chair Company which was organized 1901 with capitol of \$20,000. I do believe that the location of the plant was south State Road 9 at the curve. Does anyone have a photo of the old plant? If you have one of these chairs it is a rare antique. factories in Greenfield included one machine shop, one reclining chair company, planning mill, job printing factories, fruit jar and bottle company, saw, flour mill, bottle factory, broom factory dowel pin factory probably some others. Wilkinson had one window glass, bottle glass and kitchen cabinet factory. In 1906 Fortville had four factories which included a coil and hoop factory, flour mill, grain elevator and a chemical factory. In New Palestine you found a flour mill, sawmill, and a wagon stock factory. Maxwell chief industry was the chain works. In this time Hancock County was very industrialized but one must remember it was the during the gas boom and the era of free gas.

Enough. I have told you everything that I know and something's I don't. Talk to me at jksvarenina@hotmail.com or the Daily Reporter.

2022-08-19

Berlin

By Joe Skvarenina

Berlin was a town in Center Township that was platted but never constructed. It was laid out by William Curry during the 1830's. It was on the east bluffs of the Brandywine. It was platted to a gristmill which was running at the time. There was a note in the Hancock Democrat Newspaper in February 1885 requesting information on a Lost Town. Mrs. Mary Bragg found an item in the County Deed records with a reference to the Town of Berlin, but the exact location was not noted. "The town had 51 lots arranged on various sides of a large public square. The man that platted the town evidently believed in education as in every other square is a lot marked 'school.' There were four streets: main, Mani-cross, East, and West Street. It was surveyed by M. Casney, County Surveyor, June 5, 1834. It was attested to by County Recorder Joshua Meek. Do any of you know anything about Berlin?

Also, on March 14, 1895, services were interrupted at the Nashville Church in Brown Township by the three Railsback Brothers who were neighborhood toughs. Local farmer John Kennedy attempted to stop the raucous but was beaten senseless before members of the congregation could intervene. Warrants were issued by Sheriff Starr and only the youngest of the brothers was arrested and jailed. This was reminiscent of the summer of 1888 when Joe Railsback and John Surber were on the way to a Republican meeting in Markleville. Railsback was accused of being too intimate with Surber's wife and he was cut to pieces. Surber left the country and was never convicted.

On August 16, 1883, there was a baseball game between the Shelbyville and Greenfield Club's. There was considerable kicking by both sides causing the withdraw of Gallagher and Swope on the Greenfield Team in the seventh inning. The score 8-21 in favor of the Shelbyville team. Mr. Fleming officiated and according to the Greenfield Blues a five-year-old could have done better. The Blues were supported that day by the Action delegation and Messer's Bragg, Cooper, and Hough from Greenfield.

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2022-08-12

John Dillinger

By Joe Skvarenina

People want to place John Dillinger in Hancock. To my knowledge he never robbed a bank in our community. But he did come as close as Irvington robbing a drug store which is now the Lincoln Square Pancake House

Ryan Brown an Associate Professor at Illinois State University writes, "I am a professor at Illinois State University in Normal, Illinois. My maternal grandfather was Charlie Snider, who grew up on the Snider farm near Cumberland, Indiana. He met my grandmother while she was a student at Indiana Central now the University of Indianapolis, and he moved to southern Indiana early in their married life. I grew up near French Lick, Indiana. Nevertheless, my genealogy bug kicked in a few years ago, and I discovered the Snider Cemetery in Hancock County.

My grandfather Charlie was proud of two family members... His second Cousin John Dillinger, and his great-grandfather Joseph "Rooster" Chapman. One of Adaline's brothers, Jacob Snider, married Joseph's daughter Rebecca. I have a great picture of Jacob and Rebecca. I think Rebecca's sister also married a Snider brother.

In the past year, I have stopped into Hancock County to visit the Snider cemetery, see the Historical Rooster Marker, of Chapman fame.' Some time ago amateur genealogist Sharon Kingen also told," Adaline Lancaster was the daughter of Isaac Snider and Elizabeth Leah Watkins. From what I have examined, I believe that she was their youngest child. Leah died in 1838. Adaline's tombstone says that she was born in 1832, but census records show that she was born about 1828. In either case, she would have been a young child when her mother died. Her stepmother, Mary Collins, would have been the "mother" she probably knew better. Adaline married Francis H. Lancaster 17 May 1849 in Hancock Co., IN. Francis was a blacksmith. Apparently, he had a shop in Cumberland or that general vicinity for quite some time. They appeared in the censuses in Marion Co. from 1850 through 1880. Most of those years they were recorded as living in Cumberland. Francis died in 1896. Adaline lived on in Indianapolis and appeared in the 1900 and 1910 censuses there. Francis and Adaline had 12 children although 1 died before 1900 and another died between 1900 and 1910. Adaline died in 1913. Adaline and Francis are of some special interest because their youngest child, Mary E. Lancaster, married John Wilson Dillinger. They were the parents of THE John Herbert Dillinger. However, Mary died when John was only about 4 years old. He would have been about 10 when Adaline (his maternal grandmother) died. I find it somewhat ironic that Mary Lancaster/Dillinger's younger brother David Lancaster was recorded in the 1910 census as being a city detective in Marion Co. I can't help but wonder how the family must have felt about having both a policeman and a notorious criminal in the family..." So, this is Hancock County's Dillinger's story.

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2022-08-05

POWs

By Joe Skvarenina

Bob Wortman, the honorary Mayor of Morristown, tells us "Prisoners of war came to Morristown, mostly German but a few Italians, as a means of relieving a workforce shortage." They came from Camp Atterbury around 1944. Atterbury was a highly active army post at the time, and it became a prisoner of war campground. Wortman who was too young for military service at the time but remembers German laborers in the tomato fields at Morristown Canning Company and the Blue River Packing Company along US 52. Eventually they set up a camp on Paul Wolf's farm near the Asbury Cemetery. Local school buses transferred the workers to the fields. Paul Wolf who was Bill Wolf's father and Sarah Wolf's grandfather lived in Morristown and owned canning factories in Gwynneville, Arlington and New Palestine. The food that was being produced was used by the US Army. The prisoners often played soccer during work breaks and the residents would watch them play. If a ball were kicked to close to the fence the Germans would not retrieve it because of the armed guards. Paul Wolf, a WWI veteran, wrote about the prisoners of war in one of his "johnny letters" sent to American soldiers from the area. These "johnny letters" were formed of bits and pieces of letters sent to him by members of the armed forces from throughout the area. By the end of the war, he was mailing over 450 letters each month to his list of contributors. He described the Germans as good workers, ranging in age from 16 to 50 who really relieved a workforce shortage. If you go to Ashbury Cemetery there are remnants of the rock wall still visible.

In other news a story in the July 22, 1882, Hancock County Democrat Newspaper tells us that the African Americans of this community are preparing for a meeting at the Old Settlers Grove at the edge of the city, on August 2. I believe this would have been Boyd's Grove which is the Hancock Regional Hospital property. Elder EWS Hammond will preside with some of his best presentations. Those wishing a tent had to make application to George Knox who will wait upon them with pleasure.

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2022-07-29

By Joseph Skvarenina

Do you know Michael Vetman? He is one of the archivists at the Indiana Archives and Records Administration. If you are doing any historical research, he is someone who you should get to know. The Indiana Archives is charged with collecting, preserving, and making accessible the extensive and valuable records that tell the story of Indiana, its people and government. It is the permanent repository for records of the Indiana State and local government. It has more than 129,000 cubic feet of the records dating from the 1780's, our territorial, period to the present. There are more than 200,000 boxes and books.

For example, the Archives it contains the records of the Knightstown Home properly called the Knightstown Soldiers and Seaman's Home established in 1867 to serve the destitute and disabled veterans along with wives, widows, and orphans. The Knightstown Home became strictly an orphanage after a fire destroyed the building housing the veterans in 1871. After the Civil War, Northern Veterans organized the G.A.R., the Grand Army of the Republic, to remember their participation to save the Union. The GAR became a major force wielding influence in federal and state politics. After the last members died, their records were given to the Adjutant General of Indiana and their records are in the archives.

Through the years there were six posts in Hancock County, named in honor of deceased veterans. Charlottesville Post # 545, active from 1889 to 1898; Fortville S. D. Kempton Post #228, active from 1883 to 1930; Gem, William E. Hart Post #454, chartered 1886, no disband date given; the Greenfield Dunbar Post; New Palestine, Charles A. Kirkhoff Post #534 active 1888- 1907; and Willow Branch, Lorenzo Post #438 active from 1886-1893.

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2022-07-22

Tramps and Dirigibles

By Joe Skvarenina

On May 27, 1903, the Hancock County Democrat Newspaper reported that a tramp frightened several ladies in the city. He was taken into custody by officers Rickey, Johnson and Dudding after a chase that covered all the outskirts of the city. He was attempting to sell an inexpensive ring with the hopes people would think it stolen and worth some money. On approaching the ladies, he became threatening, and the law was called. Sheriff Larabee ran him through his rogue's gallery and found no description of the tramp and no charges could be filed. The tramp was set at liberty promising to take the car (train car) out of town. So ended a major crime spree.

I have traveled US 40 the National Road from Cumberland Maryland to Vandalia Illinois. This is the original section of the old pike. West of Zanesville Ohio you see historical markers about the Shenandoah Zeppelin disaster. The United States Navy between 1920 and 1930 had a fleet of four zeppelins: the Macon, Akron, Los Angeles, and the Shenandoah. All but the Los Angeles eventually crashed. The Los Angeles was German built and was reparations from the Versailles Treaty and flew for many years. In 1925 the Navy sent the Shenandoah on a tour of county fairs. On September 3, 1925, a thunderstorm tore the Shenandoah to pieces. Killed where 29 of the 43 crew members along with Navy Captain Lansdowne who found it difficult to keep the 690 ft. dirigible afloat. Pieces of the craft are valuable souvenirs.

Travel US 40 There many interesting things to see.

Enough. I have told you everything that I know and some things I don't. Talk to me at the jskvarenina@hotmail.com or the Daily Reporter.

2022-07-15

Harry G. Leslie

By Joe Skvarenina

I met attorney Tom Leslie the other day at the Hancock County Courthouse and was surprised to learn that he was the grandson of Indiana Governor Harry G. Leslie. Leslie was the 33rd Governor in Indiana who served in that office from January 14, 1928 to Jan 9, 1933. He also served as Speaker of the Indiana House of Representatives. Prior to that he had enrolled at the recently built Purdue University and became one of the school's immortal players. At Purdue he was the captain of the University's football and baseball teams. On October 31, 1903, his team which was on course to win the state championship took a train from Lafayette to Indianapolis to a match against Indiana University. As the train neared the 18th Street crossing in Indianapolis, it collided with another train and his coach was demolished. Eighteen of the team members were pronounced dead at the scene and taken to the morgue. The morticians preparing to embalm Leslie's body noticed he still had a pulse, and he was rushed to the hospital. Eventually he regained his health. His survival of the "Purdue Wreck" received statewide attention and he became a folk hero. He walked with a cane for the rest of his life.

In 1904 Leslie returned to class and founded the Purdue Republicans. In the 1990's and early 2000's the Purdue Young Republicans celebrated 'Leslie Day ' in his honor. As Governor he hosted President Herbert Hoover and Charles Lindbergh to Indiana. After being governor he became the founder and president of Standard Life Insurance Company in Indianapolis. Among his close friends were George Ade and Will Rogers. While visiting Ade in Miami he died of heart problems December 10, 1937. He is buried in Lafayette Indiana.

Enough. I have told you everything that I know and somethings things I don't. Talk to me at jskvarenina@hotmail.com or the Daily Reporter.

2022-07-08

By Joe Skvarenina

The Hancock County Historical Society has a new exhibit you might be interested in called "Lawn and Lace" The Museum is open in Riley Park Saturdays and Sundays noon to 5pm. Edwardian newspapers and magazines featured photographs of the rich and famous strolling in elegant dresses trimmed in layers of lace. Charles Dana Gibson's drawings of "Gibson Girls" enjoying summer holidays depicted young women with hair piled high under straw hats burdened with flowers. Actresses in hit musical comedies appeared in posters wearing these latest styles and twirling pretty parasols.

Then, as now, women were inspired by these images to adopt fashionable styles despite lacking the resources to buy their hats from French milliners and their gowns from seamstresses working in haute couture salons. Buying clothing "off the rack" was still uncommon outside the big cities, but ordinary women could order "white dresses" from catalogs such as Sears – or they could make their own.

Hancock County ladies, often from sewing clubs made these dresses for graduations or weddings much cheaper. The Historical Society will have on display some examples from local ladies of these fine cotton fabrics and ornamented with machine made tape and ribbon lace, the dresses they made more than 100 years ago display their skill and creativity. The dresses in the Lawn & Lace exhibit are ready to be viewed by the public and for future generations to enjoy. Go see it!!

On September 11, 1902 Greenfield saw the fight of the century. Local Henry Hubig engaged Harry Rogers for, Jeffersonville in a three-round contest in a rope arena lit by incandescent lamps. Rogers was a fast man who strikes awful blows. In round three Rogers starts with some vigorous punches with his powerful left. Hubig makes a leap for Roger's chest but is met with a left jab well placed over his eye. Hubig hits the ground. and was knocked out. Rogers was sent to his corner and declared the winner. Joseph W. Gates was the timekeeper and Johnny Conners was the referee.

What a day that must had been.

Enough. I have told you everything that I know and some things I don't Talk to me at jskvarenina@hotmail.com or the Daily Reporter.

2022-07-01

Postal History

By Joe Skvarenina

Dick Laird was kind enough to provide us with the Postal History of Hancock County and Indiana. It is an eye opener. At one time there were 41 Post Offices in Hancock County. For example, the Harvey Post Office operated from 1851 to 1856. It was in the now gone Jones Township and current Blue river Township. In the 1850 Census John Harvey was postmaster. The White Post office was located and kept by Samuel Blakely at his residence on the state road a distance northwest of Warrington. It operated from 1838 to 1846. When the railroad was built it was moved to Warrington. There was a Lucklow Post office in Buck Creek Township probably on the books from 1890-1895. Norman Rooney was the postmaster but it was probably never opened.

The Hancock Post office operated in Greenfield from 1829 to 1833. Lewis Tyner served twice as postmaster. The first name of this post office was Brandywine which operated as early as 1820. Samuel Jackson was postmaster at Brandywine. The name was changed to Hancock in 1829 after Hancock County was founded. Washington D.C. did not get the message the county seat had been given the name Greenfield. Brandywine was the first postmark in the county.

For many years there was a post office at Leamon's Corner in Jackson Township which is now gone. George Tague who operated a small store in Jackson Township had a post office installed and called it Binwood. It operated until the 1880's. The Buck Creek post office operated from 1832-1834. Later it was moved to Cumberland in Marion County. John Hager or maybe John Hagen was postmaster in 1832. For you collector's look at your old envelopes to look for post marks of these old places.

Enough. I have told you everything that I know and something's I don't. Talk to me at jskvarenina@hotmail.com or the Daily Reporter.

2022-06-24

By Joe Skvarenina

Florence May the Vernon Township Trustee writes , "The Vernon Township Fire Department is doing mass casualty training in mid-April. The plan is to use a train disaster scenario for the basis of the training.

I am wondering if there are any other details or better photos? There was a wreck in McCordsville in 1903."

This was a hard one to find because it really happened December 26, 1902, not 1903. I also had to call troops, Paul McNeil, local history expert at the Hancock Public Library and Chris Marshall at the Indiana Historical Bureau. It was reported in the January 1, 1903, Hancock County Democrat. It seems that Union Traction limited #223 ran into the private car "Martha" which belonged to George McCutlock, President of the Traction Company. The private car was named after McCutlock's daughter Martha. The tragedy happened at a switch east McCordsville. Eight people were injured, and one was killed. Barlett Frazier the motorman had both feet crushed and later died of his injuries. This anyone else about the know wreck. The damage to the Martha was about \$15,000.

Linda Comstock Teal also writes, 'I read your article on the train wreck in September of 1956 and I remember it well. I was 9 years old and lived at 427 N. East St. The smell was almost overwhelming, and we were several blocks away. My grandparents lived on West South Street where the parking lot is now. They were in the upstairs apartment of the Leonard Shively (I believe that was his name, I know he had the Shively Dairy) house. I do not recall if they were evacuated, but they probably were. My grandfather died of cancer in 1966, but whether it was related to the toxicity of the wreck is unknown. I do remember that for years afterwards when it rained you could still smell the chemicals that were in the ground." Linda also adds, "I enjoy reading your column each week. My husband and I have just moved back to Greenfield after a long hiatus and it has been fun catching up." Train wrecks or other accidents were a common occurrence during the heyday of the railroad. Railroads were important to the growth of Hancock County. For example, the Shirley Creosote Company was located one mile north of Shirley. On July 4, 1906, John Gordon, an employee of the plant, was electrocuted when he stepped on the 'third rail' which provided current to pull the cars of the railroad ties. In 1943 a train wreck tore away both ends of the Greenfield railroad station scattering freight and wreckage for almost three blocks and halting traffic for 12 hours. Rails were twisted and torn from the ties for almost three blocks. Riley Avenue and Pennsylvania Streets crossings were blocked. The mishap occurred shortly before 8 p.m. Saturday evening. The train was a westbound freight approximately 80 cars. It took 100 men to restore the tracks for rail traffic. On January 30, 1963, 30 boxcars of an Indianapolis bound freight train were jerked off the tracks and stacked up in block-long pile-up when the axle assembly broke at Greenfield. A railroad official said the damages would cost about \$500,000. The broke axle occurred on the 25th car of a 105-unit train. All aboard!

Enough. I have told you everything that I know and some things. I don't. Talk to me at jskvarenina@hotmail.com or the Daily Reporter.

2022-06-17

By Joe Skvarenina

Dick Laird provides us with a copy of the "Postal History of Hancock County". As early as May 1820 the post office named the area around Greenfield, Brandywine. This was before Hancock county was established in 1828. The first postmaster was Samuel Jackson. In 1829 the name was changed to Hancock. This was the year after the county was organized, and it seems the postal service had not gotten the message the county seat had been named Greenfield. From 1869 to 1881 a post office was maintained at Leamon Corner in Jackson Township. Cyrus Leamon was the postmaster. In 1881 it was closed, and George Teague installed a post office in little grocery he was running, and it was called Binwood. The Binwood post office delivered the mail until the late 1880's. In Buck Creek Township the Lucklow Post Office was on record from April 7, 1890 until June 11, 1895. Naaman C. Roney was appointed postmaster on April 7, 1890. It probably never opened. The White Post Office operated in the Warrington area from April 2, 1838 till September 14, 1849. The first post office was kept at the residence of Samuel Blakely. It later move into town and the name was changed to Warrington. The Harvey Post Office ran from December 31, 1851 until August 14, 1856. John Harvey was appointed postmaster on December 31, 1851. There was a John Harvey in Jones and Blue River Township in the 1850 Census. The Milner's Corner post office ran in Green Township from December 5, 1868 until April 30, 1903. It was on the Green Brown Township line. The first postmaster was Nimrod Davis and the last Joel Manning. It operated until in 1903 when the Wilkinson rural route was established.

Enough. I have told your everything that I know and some things I don't. Talk to me at jskvarenina@hotmail.com or the Daily Reporter.

2022-06-10

By Joe Skvarenina

Did you know that the Interurban tracks are still under the payment on the south side of 40. Greenfield businessmen promoted the Interurban Line between Greenfield and Indianapolis, Construction was awarded to C.M. Kirkpatrick of Greenfield work started in 1899 with the line regularly carrying passengers on July 17, 1900.

On September 12, 1904, the Indianapolis Traction Terminal opened as a central station for all traction companies coming into Indianapolis allowing them to better coordinate their services. In July 1905, the first joint ticket office was opened in Indianapolis. The first of its kind anywhere. It was the largest and busiest interurban terminal in the world. At its peak it handled 500 arrivals and departures per day. As the WW II approached the Interurban era grew to a close and only 14 electric railroads remained in Indiana. On December 31, 1946, the Interurban period officially ended when the Evansville and Ohio Valley made its final run The Terre Haute, Indianapolis, and Eastern Traction Line closed in Greenfield in around 1936. Riley Park Tire is an old Interurban barn. The tracks are still there. Also, I have been told the Riley Park Tire served as a ammo dump and was guarded at one time by soldiers. What do you know about the Riley Park Building and the Interurban?

Father George and son Lynn Wilfong started the Wilfong Oil and Gas Company (Sun Glow) in Willow Branch around 1959 and sold to farmers and service stations from Lafayette and Bean Blossom. After a fire in Willow Branch which destroyed their building, they moved to a vacant old interurban garage in Greenfield. At this point they became Royal (Uniroyal) Tire and Battery and eventually sold the business to Jim Helguson suggesting he use the name Riley Park Tire. Lynn being in the tire business with his dad tells the story of a Mennonite who wanted the used white walls which he purchased put on his car with the black side out. As a Mennonite he couldn't have white walls. Lynn Raised horses in Rush County just south of Hancock County and lived in a house on the underground railroad.

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2022-06-03

By Joe Skvarenina

The March 20, 1890, issue of the Hancock County Democrat newspaper printed a column entitled the "Traveling Correspondent" with no author's name. The column gives a good snapshot of democrat politics and the state of the community at the turn of the century. The rider embarked on horseback intent on seeing the boys about preparing to run for office. The first stop was Maxwell but Dr. Justice was out seeing patients. At Eden Riggs and Jarrett reported the trade was good. In the evening he stopped at John Jackson's house and found that Frank Jackson had lost his voice. His friends were hoping for his recovery. Next, he traveled over some terrible roads to the farm of John Hiatt formerly of Henry County. Hiatt had a good farm and nice home. Next, he visited Martin Murphin a staunch democrat. He then proceeded to Milners Corner, Charles Albea had retired as a farmer and went into business. He also visited Fred Keller a solid farmer in Green Township. He next stopped at Dr. Troy's office but he was gone visiting his heavy patient load. Dr. Troy was a candidate for state representative at the next county convention. Dr. Troy visits his patients on horseback. In his further journeys he founded that everyone was at David Wilson's sale in Brown Township. Nest he visited John B. and William Doc Hayes who he labeled jolly democrats. The former was as a candidate for county auditor. Last, he visited Jacob McMasters at Warrington who was retiring form the flour business and was going in with his son blacksmithing. He reported that Dr. Hanna had the LA Grippe. Last he complained about the roads being damaged by the heavy teams and the soft conditions of the roads.

More and more people in Hancock County are redoing their houses. There is no magical foundation which will give you a grant to do so. You might be able to get tax credits from the state or if you are a nonprofit a loan from Indiana Historic Landmark.

Enough I have told you everything that I know and some things I don't. Talk to me at Jksvarenina@hotmail.com or the Daily Reporter.

2022-05-27

Historic Markers

By Joe Skvarenina

Mark Sullivan for the Hancock County Historical Society provides us with a self-guided historical marker tour brochure. If you are looking something to do, this is it. In 1974 the Hancock County Historical Society organized an effort to place local historical markers in each township. The goal was to be ready by the Bicentennial on July 4, 1976. The W.H. Staples foundry was contacted to fashion each marker with a select historical text and a medallion representing the Hancock County Historical Society. A dedication ceremony was conducted for each marker during its placement in the townships. After many years of wear and tear by nature and cars, the markers needed repair. Led by Philip Power, Buck Creek Township Director for the Hancock County. All markers have been replaced or refurbished to look like new thanks to the financial support of Thomas and Carolyn Black. There are 11 markers, two in Center Township. The topics include the Elijah Store, the first store in the county in Blue River Township; the town of Tailholt in Brandywine Township; the Jonathan Evans Store in Sugar Creek Township; Cleveland Inn in Jackson Township; the Grand Fourth of July Picnic in Buck Creek Township; Phoebe's Fort Corner in Vernon Township; the Fuqua Log Cabin Site in Green Township; the Warrington Flour Mill in Brown Township; and the Black Swamp and the Seminary in Center Township.

This is a perfect opportunity to take the kids on a field trip in the county. The brochures are available from the Hancock County Historical Society. This is the perfect opportunity to learn about local history. Contact Hancockhistory.org. Each township has a QR Code you can scan with a smart phone camera or app. You can use Google Maps to navigate.

Enough I have told you everything that I know and some things I don't. Talk to me at jskvarenina@hotmail.com or the Daily Reporter.

2022-05-20

Newspapers

By Joe Skvarenina

Leah and Rodney Shelby have purchased a box of local newspapers which included the Evening Republican, Hancock Jeffersonian, Evening Tribune, and the Daily Reporter all from the 1880's and the early 1900's. They want to know how to preserve their treasures. Paul McNeil at the Hancock County Public Library tells us "Like a lot of old stuff - Dark, cool place with a stable relative humidity between 30-50%. Best to keep them stored flat and unfolded. Folded down the spine of the newspaper is fine, if it is difficult to store. The concern there is that documents shouldn't be unfolded and refolded. A good storage option is Gaylord newspaper boxes, but expensive. As newspapers tend to be low quality and acidic - it is also best to not store them with other documents. In all honesty, a lot of libraries/archives opt to microfilm their newspaper collections. They may continue to keep the newsprint after, but microfilm is the best way to store newspapers and their information long term. After that, then they might move to digitize them."

There were many local newspapers in Hancock County. These publications included the Hancock Jeffersonian owned by Richard Strickland with an annual subscription fee of \$1.00, the Greenfield Globe/Daily/ Evening Star owned by Ben Strickland, the Wednesday morning Greenfield Republican, the Hancock County Democrat, the Herald, the Evening Tribune plus probably others. In 1899 Newton Spencer took charge of the Evening Tribune and the Weekly Republican from W.S. Montgomery until his appointment as Postmaster on JUNE 5, 1902. In 1904 Newton Spencer was one of the founders and a President and one of the founders of Associated Charities of Greenfield. After his duties ended as Postmaster in 1906 Newton Spencer bought interest in Greenfield Weekly Globe and the Evening/Daily Star on December, 1906 with Ben Strickland and a third partner Eugene E. Davis. It was printed at the Globe plant in Greenfield. He eventually sold his interest and established the Daily Reporter on April 27, 1908. He was actively assisted by his wife Viola in the operations of the newspaper.

In March 1909 he bought from Greenfield Printing and Publishing or Ben Strickland the Evening Star and its subscription list for \$200. In 1910 Newton bought from Walter S. Montgomery the Evening Tribune and the Weekly Republican and merged then with the Daily Reporter. Marshall Winslow had been with the Tribune and the Republican when it was sold by W.S. Montgomery. Marshall served as City editor until he went to Europe with the Red Cross in WW I. After the war he came back to Greenfield and went to work for the Hancock County Democrat. It might be interesting to note that Spencer served as Hancock County Republican Chairman from 1896-1900.

Enough. I have told you everything that I know and some things I don't. Talk to me at jskvarenina@hotmail.com or the Daily Reporter.

2022-05-13

Number 1 Fan

By Joe Skvarenina

Ed Hendricks lived on the corner of Lincoln and Pratt since 1919 with the Mrs. In 1940 he was 80 years young and Greenfield's Number One Baseball fan. He never missed a game on the radio, and he would like to reminisce about the day when he was catcher for St. Louis Browns. That was back in the day when a glove was a luxury. The team was named after Mayor Brown who formed the league and the St. Louis Club of the American League bore the same name. Charlie Comiskey former owner of the White Sox played for the Browns. There was also the Gleason Boys who later played for the Chicago Cubs, Walter Lathem, and others. Ed Hendricks was back of the plate and caught for the Brown's for three years until Mr. Johnsson got ahold of the association and formed the American League. All games were played at the site of Sportsman's Park in St. Louis. The best seat in the Park was 25 cents and there were no big salaried players in those days. Pitchers and catchers were at the top of the salary scale at \$600. In the winter, the players would hang around the fire station looking for work. Hendricks also talked about batting against the famous Rubbe Waddell and the many baseball acquaintances he made like Gover "Old Pete" Alexander and the famous Roger Hornsby. He was truly Greenfield's Number 1 baseball fan.

In the March 5th column, I wrote about the Spanish Flu Pandemic of 1918. Linn Parsons found an error in the figures. The correction is 500 million caught the illness worldwide and of that number 20 to 50 million died from the disease. The United States had 675,000 deaths with 290,000 in Indiana. Does anyone know the number of pandemic deaths in Hancock County?

The Indiana Division of Historic Preservation & Archaeology (DHPA) serves as Indiana's State Historic Preservation Office. It promotes the conservation of Indiana cultural resources through public education efforts, financial incentives including grants and tax credit programs. The tax credit rehabilitation program may provide tax credits to owners of historic buildings and the revitalization of historic neighborhoods and commercial areas. I get that inquiry about funding a lot.

Enough. I have told you everything that I know and some things I don't. Talk to me at jskvarenina@hotmail.com or the Daily Reporter.

2022-05-06

More Disappearing Towns

By Joe Skvarenina

Andrew Evans was the first white man to enter Blue River Township in 1818. He built his cabin near a small village which later developed and was called Petersburg. It was named after Peter Binford, relatives of the Indiana 500 Tom Binford.

The Knightstown Shelbyville railroad maintained one stop in Hancock County in Blue River Township at Petersburg. It was located on the northeast corner of the southwest corner of section 33, township 15, range 8 or on the county line east of the Handy school house. Silas Haskett sold a small lot to John Young for the purpose of operating a store and a eating house which he did for several years. Young sold it to Daniel Haskett who kept a general store at the site until after the railroad went out. The Petersburg Station was a large platform for loading across the county line in Rush County.

It was an accommodating Railroad. If you failed to reach the station, you could stop the train anywhere along the line by waving a handkerchief. The Knightstown and Shelbyville was completed about 1848 and operated until 1855. It crossed the southeast corner of Blue River Township, following the south valley of the Blue River. The old grade still can be seen at some places. Tyner Pond farm is one of those sites. After the railroad was shut down and the rails were used in the Civil War. Petersburg is long gone with the demise of the train. It has simply disappeared. No one knows the exact location. Do you have any ideas?

A town was laid out on the west bank of the Sugar Creek about where it crosses south line of the northwest quarter section 22, township 17, range 7. Charleston, in Green Township, appeared in the County Commissioners records in connection with road construction. It was platted but never came into existence.

Berlin was another town but in Center Township that was platted but never constructed. It was laid out by William Curry during the 1830's. It was on the east bluffs of the Brandywine a quarter of a mile south of a north line of section 10, township 16 range 7. It was platted to a gristmill which was operating at the time.

Enough. I have told you everything that I know and some things I don't. Talk to me at jskvarenina@hotmail.com or the Daily Reporter.

2022-04-29

Disappearing Towns

By Joe Skvarenina

The little town of Leamon Corners was located the range line where sections 13, 18, 19 and 24 meet in Jackson Township. A post office and a little store, a blacksmith shop and a sawmill was at the site. The post office was operated by Cyrus Leamon in the early days but was discontinued in 1881. After it was removed, George Tague who lived along the west line of the southwest quarter of section 14, township 16, range 7 had a post office installed in a little grocery he was operating. The post office was known as Binwood. It distributed mail until the late eighties. The blacksmith shop in Leamon Corners was run by Bud Phillips's son of Thomas Phillips, who was a blacksmith in Blue River Township.

Leamon Corners had a literary society and the Hancock County Democrat, July 29, 1879, reported an entertainment at Chapman's Grove ½ mile south of Leamon Corners. It would include entertainment, declamations, orations, poems, addresses, recitations, songs, plays and ample refreshments. The county teachers were all invited.

On August 1, 1899, news from Leamon Corners included, Jesse Martin thrashing wheat for John Cook. He got 22 bushels per acre. This was the best yet thrashed. John Scott was offered \$50 per acre for his farm which was more than he paid for it. A large crowd attended the basket meeting at Center Church last Sunday. John was going to have a gas well to run a molasses mill on his property. Leamon Corner was in Jackson Township on 300n & 600E. I would guess that Leamon Corners disappeared after the post office shut down. Nothing is at the site today.

Enough I have told you everything that I know and some things I don't. Talk to me at jskvarenina@hotmail.com or the Daily Reporter.

2022-04-22

Moravians

By Joe Skvarenina

Until Hancock County was founded in 1828 it was part of Madison County and Indian Territory. In 1801 the Moravian Church founded a mission on the White River near Anderson. There is a marker at the site today. The purpose of this mission was to Christianize and "civilize" Native Americans mainly the Delaware tribe. John Peter Kluge and Abraham Luckenbach were appointed missionaries at the location by the Moravian Church. Fourteen Christian Indians formed the nucleus of the new congregation. They were the corp group that the missionaries depended upon to keep the wayward and the undecided on the beaten path. Missionaries Kluge and Luckenbach stayed at the mission five year and four months. Most of the time they were in fear for their lives and threatened daily. By the end 1805 only nine coverts remained at the mission. In 1806 the missionaries witnessed the death of Chief Tedpachxit who had invited them to the area. The chief was bought into the mission accused of witchcraft by the disciples of the 'Prophet' and tomahawked by his own son and thrown half alive into a pillar of fire in the center of the mission village. Two others suffered the same gruesome death. The missionaries had arrived at the mission at a time when Tenskwatawa, the Prophet, Tecumseh's brother held sway over other Native Americans with his new religion of a new native Indian god, "the Master of Life" that came to him in drunken dream. These events and other witchcraft killings would continue for several years and eventually result in the War of 1812 and of course the Battle of Tippecanoe.

In 1806 the church body approved the abandonment of the mission. Klug and Luckenbach left the White River and returned to church headquarters in Bethlehem Pennsylvania. The Indians left at the mission became apostates and returned to the native population. Now all that is left of the mission in the Anderson area is a historic sign. The Moravians founded 32 Indian mission in North American between 1740 to 1821. The last one closed in 1903. If you drive around Indiana you can find Moravian Churches. I know there is one in Indianapolis and a big church in Hope and one in the Southport area. These church have some interesting history.

Enough. I have told you everything that I know and some things I don't. Talk to me at jskvarenina@hotmail.com or the Daily Reporter.

Mohawk School

2022-04-15

By Joe Skvarenina

Can you help identify the people standing in front of the old Mohawk School circa 1949-1950? According to Greg Murphy the Mohawk School was on the east side of 200 West (Mohawk Road) in Center Township. After you pass 400N stop sign pass two houses on the right, then there are two Bedford Stone houses built at the school site. Nothing is left of the old school. The old Mohawk School had six grades. It was closed in 1930. Mohawk School had two teachers. Since one half of Mohawk was in Center Township the other In Buck Creek Township the children in Buck Creek went to Mt. Comfort School while the ones in Center went to Maxwell School. In 1915 there were 30 one room schoolhouses in Hancock County. No townships consolidated their schools except Blue River.

The last one room, schoolhouse was the Ada New School in east Greenfield. It was abandoned in 1947. In 1959 the Indiana School Organization Act required all districts have 1000 students. Thus, the death of the one room school district. A committee of local citizens drew the lines. Jackson, Brown, and Blue River Townships were in the Eastern District; Green and Center Townships were in the Greenfield Central District. Sugar Creek and Brandywine were in the Southern Hancock School Corporation. Buck Creek and Vernon were in the Mount Vernon School system.

It is interesting to note that Hancock County voted against free schools in 1848 and 1849. But they did vote for the 1851 Indiana Constitution which had free public schools' provisions in it.

If you can identify any of folks in the Mohawk School photo, email me. Last Gladys Teal wrote the "History of Education in Hancock County in 1939. Does anyone have it?

Enough. I have told you everything that I know and some things I don't. Talk to me at jskvarenina@hotmail.com or the Daily Reporter.

Mohawk, Indiana School – possibly former student reunion

Circa 1949 / 1950

1. Naomi NEWMAN Fetteroff
2. ?
3. Myra NEWMAN Beck
4. Martha NEWMAN McClammer
5. Mike McClammer
6. Merle McClammer
7. ?
8. ?
9. ?
10. ?
11. ?

12. ?
13. Nancy GLENN Holder
14. Jewell BARNARD Glenn
15. ?
16. ?
17. ?
18. ?
19. ?
20. Cecil “Turk” Barnard
21. Elnora SIMPSON Barnard
22. Joseph Gilbert Glenn
23. Bob Glenn

Mohawk School Hancock Co. IN.
Probably a Reunion of Former Students



School Houses

2022-04-08

By Joe Skvarenina

Jane Wakeland writes, " Do you know what the cement sign above the door once said? The old schoolhouse is located on 200 South at the bend in the road on the Morristown Pike." The cement sign is the cornerstone for the schoolhouse and it was hard to read with my binoculars. So I enlisted the instance of John Milburn the county GIS coordinator.

He is a man of great knowledge.

GIS, I do believe stands for Geographic Information Systems. The sign would have contained the name of the schoolhouse, the district number, the year it was built and the Township Trustee who built it. The school was for District #3 in Center Township. The name of the School was College Hill The school was in operation in 1878 with the last term 1914-1915. There were 11 school districts in Center Townships at the time. In 1882 the teachers at College Hill was Emma B Parnell. The Township Trustees during that time period included S.T. Dickerson 1870, James McClarnon 1874, William Potts, 1878, and Robert D. Copper 1880. The Trustee's name is unreadable on the sign. But it has to be one of these folks. The school is not on the 1880'a Atlas of Hancock County but it is on the 1906 Atlas.

I am still looking for the burial spot of John Rynearson who fought in the War of 1812. Son William who fought for the Union in the Civil War is buried in the Philadelphia graveyard. Shannon Jones tells that there is an old graveyard off of 300W south of the National Road with 15 to 20 graves dating back in to the early 1800's on the Skillman property. Who now about this cemetery?

Enough. I have told you everything that I know and some things I don't. Talk to me at jskvarenina@hotmail.com or the Daily Reporter.



2022-04-01

By Joe Skvarenina

Chris Desong writes, "I found the subject brochure in some of my great aunt's things and in it under Brandywine Township it notes that my Grandmother (Mrs. Raymond Low) is "the proud possessor" of the account book for the toll pike that once existed on what is now Franklin Rd. I do have the journal that documents information regarding creation, expansion and sale, membership, and organizational details of the "The Greenfield and Brandywine Gravel Company" which ran the toll road. It is in very rough shape and by the grace of God I inadvertently saved it from fire destruction several years back.

From what little I have read from the journal; the actual creation of the company took place in 1866 and the road it was allowed by the county to control, and run was expanded in 1878. Then in August 1889 the Company sold the road it operated to the county and dissolved the Company. At the time of the sale, my Great Grandfather, R.W. Low was a shareholder of the Company. A toll house existed at the junction of what is now 500 S. and Franklin road*. Given its history, I am a bit surprised that southern Franklin Road isn't known as "Fountaintown Pike".

Chris also writes. "As an aside, were you aware of the old log cabin that existed up until the last 15 or 20 years that was approximately a quarter mile west from the noted toll house on the south side of 500 S.? My older brother said he thought for many years the log cabin was the oldest structure in Brandywine Township and that he had seen a photo of it in one of the HCHS publications. It was within line of sight (if not for the trees) from the farmhouse (1876) I now live in. Prior to 1876, the family lived in a structure behind this house which was built in roughly 1830. It became a smokehouse for the family (by the 1960's the smokehouse was in a collapsed state and it, and its traces were completely removed when my parents took over the farm and renovated the 1876 farmhouse in 1988-90. Our farm has continuously been owned by Lows or their decedents since receipt of original title from the US government."

Thanks, Chris for the wealth of information on Brandywine Township. Enough, I have told you everything that I know and some things I don't. Talk to me at jskvarenina@hotmail.com or the Daily Reporter.

2022-03-25

By Joe Skvarenina

More on the Cleveland Inn.

June Jacobs Cecil Walker owned the old stagecoach Inn in Cleveland. The town was laid out on July 8, 1834 by E. Wood. At one time people thought that Cleveland should be the county seat. But it lost out to Greenfield. Until 1855 the community was known by the name of Portland. The Old Cleveland Inn was operated as a tavern by the Sample family. Later the property was operated by Roscoe Thomas who was a teacher and educator. It was known as a half-way house because it was just that between Richmond. and Indianapolis. June Cecil (walker) owned it in the 1960's. According to her three fourths of the house was original and the dining room had hand hewn solid walnut timbers. The Cecil's called it Holiday Lodge and since it was so close to Greenfield many community banquets, celebrations and other parties were held at the location. Stories would appear in the Daily Reporter that, " A farewell dinner honoring Marine Sgt. Tom Jacobs and family was held June 25 on the lawn at the Holiday Lodge..." it was six miles from Greenfield and a well-lighted sign marked the spot. A half a chicken dinner was \$2.50. It included relish tray, mashed potatoes and creamed gravy, green beans or buttered corn, Cole slaw or cottage cheese, hot biscuits and dessert and coffee. A 12 oz. T-Bone steak was \$3.25. June claimed the property was haunted and she isn't the only one who tells the Cleveland Inn was haunted.

The Gooding Tavern, on the southwest corner of State and Main in Greenfield had various very important visitors like former President Martin Van Buren and Henry Clay. The site is the current location of the Greenfield City Hall. The Gooding Tavern was begun in 1832 by Joseph Chapman and later additions were added by Asa Gooding. It was run for many years by Gooding's wife Matilda. Another, the Guymon Housel was built in the 1840's was destroyed by a fire in 1900 and now the site is an empty parking lot beside the Lincoln Pancake House. The second-floor balcony at the Guymon House was an excellent space for public speeches. The long-gone Dunbar House on the corner of State and Main was the site of a Civil War argument and knifing. I am sure that there is more. The Gooding Tavern was first named the Dunbar House.

Enough. I have told you everything that I know and some things I don't. Talk to me at jskvarenina@hotmail.com or the Daily Reporter

2022-03-18

Cleveland Inn

By Joe Skvarenina

One reader writes, "There was a way house or inn located along the Nat'l road (US 40) in Jackson Twp. in the community of Cleveland. I don't recall the name by which it was called. However, the building still exists. I hope you have more detail, and perhaps the name of the person who owns the property now or information on the whereabouts of its historical artifacts."

I'm looking for names and locations of way houses that were in business around 1880. I hope to find guest registers that may include my ancestors the John Robert OHNSAT family, who travelled the National Road by Conestoga wagon from Pittsburgh Pennsylvania to Pittsburgh Kansas around 1882.

I know that National Road travel was eclipsed by the railway system, beginning as early as the 1860s. However, a family anecdote claims the family took the National Road, and even one register entry would help prove the anecdote's truth. I welcome more information..."

There were hotels, inns and taverns along the national road in Charlottesville, Cleveland, Greenfield, and Philadelphia. The National Road also known as the Cumberland Road was the first federal highway, surveyed in 1827, and constructed through Indiana in 1835 and 1835. The Dayton and Indianapolis Stage brought mail east while pioneer moved west on this highway. After 1838 it became a toll road. The first gravel road in the county, the Knightstown and Warrington Gravel Road was constructed in 1859 and charged tolls. Most of the roads became free roads in 1894 after the last one, the New Palestine and Eastern Gravel Road surrendered its charter.

The first railroad in Hancock County didn't last very long. The Knightstown-Shelbyville Road 1844-1845 cut across the southeast corner of Blue River Township. The Bee Line was constructed across the northwest corner of Vernon Township in 1850. then known as the Big Four it is now known as the New York Central. The Indiana Central line was built in 1853 followed the National Road. It was eventually known as the Penn Central. The Old Junction known as the Cincinnati, Hamilton and Indianapolis followed the Brookville Road after the Civil War and is now known as the Baltimore and Ohio. In 1882 the Indiana, Bloomington and Western, the branch of the Big Four crossed at Shirley. The Interurbans began about 1900 and operated until the late 1930's. The Shallow Bus Lines went to downtown Indianapolis until the late 1960's.

Now about the Cleveland Inn. It is still in existence, June Walker owned and operated it for a time. Currently it is a private home. The current owners want to know if a prostitute was murdered at the Inn. I find no evidence of that happening. What do you know?

Enough. I have told you everything that I know and something's I don't. Talk to me at jskvarenina@hotmail.com or the Daily Reporter.

2022-03-11

You Got One Hour...

By Joe Skvarenina

Mark Sullivan shares the following stories with us. In 1884 Mr. James Goble was accosted by Mr. James Preston who demanded of Goble that he go and withdraw the affidavit he filed against her husband for grand larceny. She displayed a revolver saying, 'Go and do for you will this or you will be given one hour to select your coffin,' She was persuaded to drop the revolver and the matter was dropped." Goble's business was the parking lot next to prosecutor's office.

In 1897 in Western Hancock County R.A. Webster head a wagon pass by his home and stop at his barn. He went and got his neighbor and saw a man fill eleven sacks with wheat from the barn. He and his neighbor armed with shotguns stopped the theft. The thief was from Indianapolis.

In 1910 Mr. James Garr passed away. He was the first member of the Blue Lodge N0. 101 of the Free and Accepted Masons in Greenfield. When he died, he was the oldest member.

In 1909 Liverymen and officers of officers were notified at 11 at night that a rig and a horse were stolen from a hitching post on main street in Fortville. The description of the rig was sent out to the Horse Thief Detective Association and by 7 am the next morning. Mr. David Bolinder was brought to Fortville and eventually lodged in the county jail. for the theft. Mr. James Crouch was the captain of the Fortville Horse Thief Detective Association. Bolander's trial was held in the Grand Hotel. He had been seen with the rig near his home northwest of Mohawk. He told the officers he took the rig because he just didn't want to walk the seven miles home. This was Bolander's second conviction for horse theft. But the first time the horse found its way home.

Have you ever heard of the National Horse Thief Association? The sixty sixth annual session was held on October 5-6, 1926, in Franklin Indiana. This organization according to the publication was to cooperate with all citizens, officials and or organizations in the county and state in maintaining the supremacy of law and securing its proper enforcement. It was the duty of the Horse Thief Detective Association to uphold the actions and to assist the sheriffs, police officers, prosecuting attorneys and courts in the protection of our citizenship against the invasion of murderer, banditry, thief, and felon and insist on the apprehension and conviction of such criminals. The real aim was to gain the confidence of the courts and peace officers, legislature, and the law-abiding citizens of Indiana. In addition, according to their publication the sheriffs of some counties were ready to appoint the members as deputies if they are recommended by the Association.

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2022-03-04

Spanish Flu

By Joe Skvarenina

Linda Dunn writes, "I wondered what your thoughts were on Hancock County's response during the Pandemic of 1918. I'm forwarding some clippings I have from the local archives that I found of interest. I noticed that San Francisco had an "anti-mask protest" that didn't gain much interest. Our only real protest seems to have been in Fortville where residents apparently became fed up with the openings and closures of schools, churches, and other institutions by then health official Whitham. They held a town meeting and apparently imposed stricter sanctions.

"The Spanish Flu Pandemic appeared first with military personnel in the Spring of 1918. In Indiana, the Spanish flu went from September 1918 till Feb 1919. Five hundred thousand people, 1/3 of the world's population died from the pandemic. In the United States there was 675,000 deaths with 290,000 being in Indiana. On Oct 6, 1918, the Indiana State Board of Health ordered the County or City Health Officers to close all schools, churches, amusements including pool rooms and picture theaters. Schools in Hancock were first closed for one month and at the end of the time the schools resumed operating. But the epidemic broke out again and the schools closed for a few more days. All schools lost about one month to ten days in time. When the schools did reopen many of them had only 50% attendance. Churches were closed for several weeks, and you couldn't buy dish of ice cream or a soda in Greenfield. People also wore face masks for protection. This was one of the worst epidemics in memory for Hancock people. It was thought to have begun in the Orient and then spread to Europe and the United States. Most all families were affected by it. Sound familiar? You were also told not to spit on the sidewalk.

Also, Greg Murphy provides additional information, J.K. Lilly announced he maintained a work force of 100 workers in Greenfield and Greenfield to provide large quantities of the vaccine. So, Greenfield had a role in combating Spanish Flu or LA Grippe as it was called.

Enough. I have told you everything that I know and some things I don't. Talk to me at 317-518-1467 or at the Daily Reporter.

2022-02-25

Poor Farm

By Joseph Skvarenina

In 1851 the Hancock County Commissioners bought the George Anderson farm for the propose of providing a home for the poor. In 1866 the County Commissioners bought another farm to house the poor. There was a frame building residence on this farm used as an infirmary. In 1883 it was decided to construct a new building. The administration building was in front with two story brick section in the rear. Men lived on the first floor and women on the second. It was heated with steam and had iron beds and chairs. There were separate dining rooms. Two tubs provided weekly baths. At one time it was suggested to be turned into an industrial training school for boys.

If you go out east 40 between 400 and 50 east on the north side of the road you can see the new jail location. Just to the east of the site is a grove of trees and this is a Pauper Cemetery for the old poor farm. This was used as burying ground for the poor farm residents, no gravestones, just sunken areas. William Kemmer who was lynched was buried at the site. Some say with the rope still is around his neck. In 1887 the Poor Farm was on the North side of the Highway. In 1890 or maybe 1900 a two-story brick building was built on the south side. This is the one which most of us remember.

The Hancock County Democrat Newspaper December 18, 1890, gives us an idea of commerce involved with the poor asylum. For example, Ham Strickland and John Frey sold groceries, J. Ward Walker, Dry Goods; J.C. Alexander, flour and meal; W.H. Haines, meat; Joseph Hendrickson, repair of shoes, Trees Brothers, black smithing; J. B. Munden, threshing clover; I.O.O. F. Lodge 135, corn; Edward Alford and George Crider, butchering, Joseph B. Kinder, paint, and J. W. Rule, lumber. James Caldwell was the Superintendent at the time.

Enough. I have told you everything that I know and some I don't talk to me at jskvarenina@hotmail.com or the Daily Reporter.

2022-02-18

Jim Dandy

By Joe Skvarenina

Dave Reasner, President of J.D. Restaurants, Inc., owners and operators of the Jim Dandy Restaurants in Greenfield, Tipton, and Noblesville, as well as twelve Dairy Queens, including Greenfield, has announced the temporary closing of the Greenfield's Jim Dandy effective at the end of business on December 14, 2020. This year they announced the permanent closing. It had been part of the Greenfield Community since 1955. It started out as a drive in next to Riley Park Tire catering to the teen market. Youngsters would cruise between Jim Dandy's and Crider's Drive Inn. This building was torn down, and indoor restaurant was built in 1969 next to Riley Park which is now a business office. Eventually Jim Dandy's moved north of town before it closed. In 1965 Whitey Ware went to work at Jim Dandy's. He had started to work at Link Fair's restaurant in 1925. The wet tenderloin was invented at Link Fair's. The Fairs lived upstairs at Bradley Hall Hotel on the second floor now the Riley Emporium building. Fairs was a 'men' only lunch stand that sold beer. They also sold tenderloins and chili for 25 cents. Jesse Fair would have tenderloin and a bowl of brown gravy sent up for his lunch each day. The tenderloin didn't fall into the gravy has rumored but Whitey invented it as a wet tenderloin. Fairs was at the location of Rock's Jewelry Store on the south side of Main Street. The kitchen was still in the basement and the dishes are still down the basement it is told.

Mark Armstrong shares articles from the Greenfield Evening Republican, April 6, 1911. "Burglars entered Clint Parker's home after running through the rooms on the ground floor they stole three cigars while Clint slept. Clint was mad because they didn't call upstairs where he was sleeping. He says he invites them back again and he will entertain them." Also, February 26, 1896, in the Greenfield Evening Republican, "The Madison County Sheriff traced thieves from Ingalls to Greenfield using bloodhounds. The crooks had a hired a driver to take them to Greenfield. They were from Red Key, and they were going to look for work at the Fruit Jar Company, now Hardee's. They were looking in town looking for a rooming house and haven't been found yet. The Bottle Works is nonunion causing several tramp glass blowers to travel through town. These men stay in town long enough to swindle some citizen."

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2022-02-11

Courthouse

By Joe Skvarenina

Have you ever seen the Henry County Courthouse? It is made of brick and very different from the Hancock County Courthouse which is made of Bedford Limestone. Our present Courthouse is our fourth and was completed and ready for use in 1898. The final cost was \$242,000. The present Henry County Courthouse was built between 1865 and 1869 with an Annex built in 1905. The Henry County Commissioners wanted a fireproof building since an earlier one burnt down in 1865. It cost \$164,000 with the Annex. Their architect was Isaac Hodgson. The Henry County Courthouse has a Mansar roof and a 110 ft clock tower. The Hancock County Courthouse architect was Wing and Mahurin of Fort Wayne. Some say it has elements of Richardson Romanesque, Victorian Gothic and Chateausque architecture. Our courthouse has gargoyles. It also has a Howard Clock in the bell tower costing \$2,000 at the time.

A statue of James Whitcomb Riley was erected at the front entrance in 1918. Myra Reynolds Richards of Indianapolis was the artist. There is a bust of Riley done by her at the Lockerbie House. Money to erect the statue in Greenfield was made possible by children worldwide through a promotional plan by locals. School classes that collected funds either received a bust of Riley or a painting of the "Ole Swimmin Hole" by Bixler. At times you encounter these items at auctions.

Have you watched the movie, Hoosiers? Some of it was filmed in the historic gym at Knightstown. This gym was used for basketball games until 1966. Before that Knightstown played on the third floor of the Academy and then upstairs at Jolly Drugs but the team had to play around pillars on the floor at that spot. Now 60,000 people visit that iconic structure from seven different counties. The first game in the gym was November 25, 1921 against Sulphur Springs with Knightstown winning. Robert Garner has written a book "Hoosiers Eleven Lessons for Life" which examines the moral lessons of the film. It is a great read. You can reach him at rgarner@11lessonsforlife.com

Enough. I have told you everything that I know and some things I don't. Talk to me jskvarenina@hotmail.com or the Daily Reporter.

2022-02-04

Philadelphia Cemetery

By Joe Skvarenina

Bob Young writes, "I have a friend who found some of his ancestors buried in the Philadelphia Cemetery. John and William Rynearson are the names of his ancestors. William fought in the civil war, John in the war of 1812.

It seems on Find-a-grave website, the Cemetery is listed as the 'Philadelphia Lutheran Church Cemetery', and made a reference there used to be a Lutheran church on that site.

Are you aware of any records or photos for this church? Do you know the person to contact regarding Philadelphia Cemetery? Any help leading me in the direction is greatly appreciated."

The only "Lutheran" Cemetery in Sugar Creek township is Zion Lutheran Church's in New Palestine. William is buried in the Philadelphia which is associated with the Methodist Church at the location. I know of only one Lutheran burying ground in the county at Zion Lutheran Church. The Roesner and the Schildmeier come close to being Lutheran cemeteries, but they are in New Palestine. Many Lutherans are buried at both but no Rynerson's. Philadelphia Cemetery is separately incorporated. You need to get Sue Bakers 'Hancock County Indiana Tombstone In inscriptions 100 years ' book there are copies at the Library. I hope that this helps. There was never a Lutheran Church in Philadelphia. It must be a misprint. William Rynerson died in 1909. He was in Company D 38 Infantry of the Union Army of the Civil War. Philadelphia Cemetery was also known as the Hawkins Cemetery. Lots cost \$6.00 each. It was surveyed in 1871 and the deed was given to the Philadelphia Methodist Church. The trustees of the church were to fence the property and see to the upkeep. When the deed was presented to the congregation W.S. Fries, the surveyor, gave a discourse on the "Sacredness of the Grave". In 1908 it was incorporated under the laws of Indiana and became the responsibility of the lot owners. I count 14 pioneer cemeteries in Sugar Creek Township. Does anyone know where John might be buried? There are times when these fellows from the War of 1812 were buried in solitary graves on farms.

The Binford History of Hancock County records some interesting deaths. A Mr. Johnson drowned himself in a pond northeast of Maxwell. Theodore Gant was stuck over the head with a wooden poker by his teacher at Judkins School March 8, 1870. Mrs. George Harris hanged herself with a skein of yarn attached to a joist in 1845. Willian Frost fell from a willow tree producing instant death. Lewis B Harris was found dead and badly mutilated on the railroad, supposedly murdered and thrown on the track, November 1865. John Hayes burned to death if the first Log Jail in 1833. The good old days?

Enough. I have told you everything that I know and some things I don't. Talk to me at jskvarenina@hotmail.com or the Daily Reporter.

2022-01-28

By Joseph Skvarenina

McCord

Sarah Frazer writes "I especially enjoy your columns. My late husband was a descendent of the McCord, Apple, and other early Oaklandon and McCordsville settlers. In 1938y parents purchased a house and 4 acres at the SE corner of 600W and 900N in Vernon Township. The deeds we have shown that the property was originally set aside for a school. All that was left were a few weather-beaten red bricks. The house that is there now was built about 1900. In your research, have you uncovered any documentation." John Milburn from the County Surveyors Office tells us, the closest school (school #8) in both the 1887 and 1906 Atlas of Hancock County is in the SE corner of the intersection of 500 W & 900 N. There may have been some confusion regarding its location if her family if it was thought it was in the SE corner of 600 W & 900 N. Additionally, in Binford's 'History of Hancock County', seven of the eight schools in Vernon Township are described as frame construction, only a single school was brick. It's unlikely the brick foundation on her property belonged to a school. Perhaps it was an old residence? Can anyone provide Sarah with additional information?

McCordsville was established on September 11, 1865 by James W. Negley with 34 lots. But before in 1854 Elis McCord built a gristmill at the town site. The community is named after the members of the McCord family. According to the Richman History of Hancock County about 1895, or possibly a year or two earlier, S. Morrison and Thomas Springer established a telephone factory at McCordsville. A few years later they sold it to the Eureka Electric Company, of Chicago, who operated the plant until 1902 when it was sold to Luther Frost, Seymour Morrison, Frank Martindale, and others. The purchasers then incorporated under the name of the Columbia Electric Company and continued to manufacture telephones until 1905. In that year Luther Frost and others established the Leader automobile factory, at McCordsville, where the first Leader automobiles were assembled. This plant was operated until 1907, when it was moved to Knightstown. McCordsville was incorporated in 1988.

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2022-01-21

By Joe Skvarenina

NineStar traces its roots back to the founding of the McCordsville Telephone Company in 1895. It is the parent company of Hancock Telecom. In 1895, Loren Helms, a telephone factory worker, strung a wire across a back fence from his mother's house to the home of his sister, Mrs. Charles Peal and installed the first telephones in the community. Soon, three neighbors (Hiram Dunham, James Thomas, and Robert Wilson) joined the line, and a company was born. Similar community ventures between 1900 and 1903, led to the formation of four other telephone companies in Hancock County – the Maxwell Telephone Company, the Mohawk Telephone Company, the Eden Telephone Company, and the Willow Branch Telephone Company. All these companies started with somewhere between 12 and 25 customers.

1930s

The idea of electric lights on Hancock County farms seemed a distant dream in 1934, when Hancock County Farm Bureau President John T. Wilson of Green Township first brought up the idea at a meeting. During the fall of that year, the Indiana Farm Bureau Cooperative Association led an initiative to establish the Indiana Rural Electric Act which was passed by the Indiana General Assembly in 1935. That law provided for a charter and franchise for cooperative corporations to provide electricity to unserved areas of the state.

On August 14, 1935, an organizational meeting of 39 people from various Hancock County townships was held at the Memorial Building in Greenfield, to establish the Hancock County Rural Electric Membership Corporation (REMC). Fifteen incorporators signed the Articles of Incorporation, and seven directors were elected to the Board: John T. Wilson, president (Green Township); Claude Grist, vice president (Buck Creek Township); Russell Cushman, secretary (Vernon Township); Frank L. Marsh, treasurer (Center Township); W. Roy Hasler (Brown Township); L.H. Collins (Jackson Township); John S. Bentley (Blue River Township). At the beginning of 1936, residents in unserved areas were solicited to become members of the new cooperative. By March 16, 968 people had become members. April 21, the Articles of Incorporation were filed with the Secretary of State and the following day an application was filed with the Indiana Public Service Commission (now known as the Indiana Utility Regulatory Commission). The Articles of Incorporation were approved May 22, and the Hancock County REMC was officially created. The first loan from the REMC was \$325,000 made November 22, 1936. Bids for line construction were accepted in April. During the summer months of 1937, REMC approved funds of \$41,600.41 for the construction of lines on Hancock, Shelby, Marion, Johnson, Bartholomew, and Decatur counties. The first pole was set November 1, 1936, on the Charles Brandle Farm in Vernon Township. First miles of line energized were 325 miles. The first homes energized were on May 17, 1938, due west of Willow Branch. The individuals energized were George Seal and Noble Watson. The number of homes energized was 815. The average price of electric bills when the co-op first began was \$3. Price per kwh of electricity when the co-op was first organized – the first kwh was \$0.075, the next 30 kwhs for \$0.05, the next 170 kwhs for \$0.03, and all over 230 kwhs for \$0.02 per kwh. The average members per mile when first energized was 2.4. The first headquarters was located at 12 West Main Street in the Greenfield Arcade Building. Miss Martha Ellen Boland was the secretary in charge of the office. "Soon electric lights will blaze from the farmhouse windows where for years the only

illumination was the subtle light of kerosene lamps...food will be kept fresh and pure in electric refrigerators ... food will be cooked perfectly on electric ranges...cows will be milked by electric machines and cream will be separated electrically or be churned electrically and electricity will pump a pure supply of water into modern bathrooms. The progress of modern convenience will be enjoyed in farm homes of Hancock County.

Enough. I have told you everything that I know and some things I don't. Talk to me at jskvarenina@hotmail.com or the Daily Reporter.

2022-01-14

By Joe Skvarenina

Did you know that Purdue University almost was built in Greenfield?

James L. Mason was the Hancock County Representative to the State Senate at the time when Purdue was founded. several counties wanted the school at their location. Thinking himself as a man on influence, Mr. Mason offered legislation for the school be in Hancock County. In 1867 Mr. Mason introduced a bill to give Hancock County the nod and indicating that the County Commissioners were willing to donate \$100,000 of the county's money for this project. The decision went undecided for two years. In 1869 the County Commissioners went to work and offered to give the original one hundred thousand dollars in cash in June 1869 or three installments; one in June of 1870 of \$41,666; the second in June 1871 of \$41,666; one in June of 1872 of \$41,666. The commissioners at the time were William New and James Tyner.

But Mr. Purdue of Lafayette won site location when he offered one hundred and fifty thousand dollars of his own money in addition to the sum offered by Hancock county with the stipulation that the college be called Purdue Agricultural College at Battleground. The Hancock Democrat newspaper complained, "This is the most magnificent offer, but why should the Legislature favor the rich against the poor."

To all my Purdue friends, you almost got there!

Later it was rumored that Northwest Christian University founded in 1855 renamed Butler University in 1877 was going to move out of Irvington because of space limitations. Some thought it should be move to the Hancock fairgrounds or the hospital property. Spearheading this effort to get Butler University to relocate to Greenfield was John f. Mitchell Jr. magazine feature writer and play write and eventually editor of the Hancock County Democrat. Mitchell was educated at Butler along with at the time Greenfield students Beulah Meek Garriott, Bess New, Tom Black, Mary Bragg Hughes, Gerald Woods, and Dick Strickland. Butler University was an easy interurban ride from Greenfield.

But it was not to be, the site chosen for Butler in 1928-1929 was the Fairview area of Indianapolis. John Mitchell Jr. was on the Board of Directors of Butler from 1935-1963

Enough I have told you everything that I know and some things I don't. Talk to me at jskvarenina@hotmail.com or the Daily Reporter.

2022-01-07

By Joe Skvarenina

There were several churches in the early Jackson township history that no longer exists. Among them was the Missionary Baptist Union Church. It was organized July 19, 1852, at a location which was known as Pleasant Hill. The congregation had two buildings and worshiped until the 1890's when the church organization dissolved from deaths and removals of membership and the building was torn down. Center Church Society of Friends on the northwest quarter of the southeast corner of section 24, township 16, range building was erected 1879 at a cost of \$300. When the church was first organized in 1878 services were conducted at the Leamon Corner's school house until the church edifice was constructed. Worship at the church ended in the 1890's. The current Charlottesville Friends located south of the railroad tracks in Rush county was established during the late 60's.

The Pleasant Hill Methodist Episcopal Church was organized at the residence Moses Braddock in 1834. When it was first organized it belonged to the Knightstown Circuit. In 1838 the congregation constructed a log church which was also used as a school. In 1841 the church was made part of the Greenfield Circuit. In 1852 a new church was built south of Willow today, Willow Branch. Both churches stood about 80 rods east of the range land. After the Big Four railroad was constructed and passed through Willow Branch the congregation erected a church there on the west side.

An Evangelical Lutheran Church was organized Charlottesville in 1847 by Pastor Wells. The first person to preach in the building was Pastor S.P. Snider. The church ran well for several years with the highest membership of 150. Eventually members scattered and services ceased to be held in the early 60's. In the later eighties the church was remodeled and used by the just organized Christian congregation.

The Baptists also held worship Silas Huntington's Home in the extreme northwest of Jackson County for several years. The New Lights Society also had a little church in the northeast of the county for several years.

The Christian Church of Charlottesville was organized in 1888 with thirteen members. The congregation secured the old abandoned Lutheran Church and fixed it up to use as place of worship until they could afford a new structure. A new building was built in the north end of town but was destroyed by a storm on June 25, 1902. A new substantial frame structure seating 400 individuals was rebuilt in 1903. It was dedicated in 1903 by Rev. Hufford. This is the current structure at the site. The church is now called the By His Grace, Charlottesville Worship Center.

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2021-12-31

Historical Society

By Joe Skvarenina

The Hancock Historical Society was founded September 26, 1964 at the Presbyterian Church. Those present voted to proceed with a permanent organization. Mrs. Paul Ogg was Temporary Chairman. Two themes of the first meeting was the need for the Historical Society and History can be fun. Committee to select permanent officers included Mrs. Amy Rooney, Miss Bev. Montrose, Tom Williams, Lester Fiqua, and Paul Terrell. In 1963 the lighted display case at the hospital was the first activity. In it was exhibited Civil War items from the collections of CW Tidrow and John Sullivan. In 1966 June Williams started writing a column for the newspaper called Halcyon Hancock where we live the life of Riley. The Society has two museums, the Chapel in the Park and the Log Jail. The Log Jail museum was moved to Riley Park in 1967. This structure was built in 1853 on the south side of the public square according to the specification issued by the county commissioners. This structure was beside the gas company on South Street when moved to Riley Park. The move to Riley Park would have been the second mover for the Log Jail. The interior and exterior are solid logs 12 inches thick. The walls and floors in the second floor cell room are nailed with square nails about two inches apart. This was cheap security for those who wanted to saw out. The cell doors were of heavy oak also filled with nails. When built the windows were barred. When constructed, it was intended to provide a jail without the use of expensive iron. The Chapel in the Park the former Philadelphia United Methodist Church was built in 1856. It was first moved at the site in 1906. It was moved again to Riley Park in June 1981. Marjorie Hughes Walker was the first President of the Hancock Historical Society. Later the Society had a lighted display case in the Hancock County Court House. In 1965 Bibles were exhibited in the case in the County Courthouse by the Historical Society. The Bibles illustrated different ages and languages in their texts. The Hancock County Historical Society in 1965 estimated that Hancock County had an average of one church every five or six miles.

What do you know about Spring Lake? Located about one half mile southwest of Philadelphia, the Spring Lake Park had been named for a small lake created by a dam in 1885. It was first known as Dyers Grove. In 1912 it was platted and in 1927 it became an incorporated town. The Spring Lake Men's Club met in the old ice house and was incorporated in 1947. This group raised \$16,110 and eventually constructed the community center.

2021-12-24

By Joseph Skvarenina

Paul Fedorchak was editor of the Daily Reporter from 1984 till 1996. Prior to his arrival in Greenfield, he was with its sister publication, the Daily Journal in Franklin. When Paul became editor there were only 4 reporters in the Newsroom, prior to his departure the news staff climbed to 9 individuals. Also, during Paul's tenure, the Daily reporter was just beginning to become involved in the technological revolution with the use of computers and beginning to use some of the first color photos in newsprint. Paul aspired to honesty and balance in reporting. He was often quoted as saying that "opinion belongs on the opinion page." Major stories in his newsroom included the 1985 Riley School fire, the murder of Sheriff Malcolm Grass in 1986, and the retirement of five term Mayor Keith McClarnon in 1995. Reporter Roger Loney, in addition covered the politics and the mismanagement, of the County Welfare department. During these years, the population of Greenfield and the north side of the city expanded greatly with new businesses. In 1990 Home News Enterprises reaffirmed its commitment to Hancock County with the Daily Reporter move from downtown Greenfield to the north side to a new building. At the site a time capsule to commemorate the move was buried. The Daily reporter, the Advertiser, and the Harrison post were to be published at the new site. Sheriff Malcolm E. Grass was a resident of Shirley. There is a pocket park in his honor. A memorial is at the site of the old Water Tower in Shirley. Grass served two terms as Hancock County Sheriff, 1974-1978, and he was with the Sheriff's Department for a period of 14 years. He served 8 years as Deputy Marshall of Shirley and was an 18-year veteran of the Shirley Fire Department. His fatal shooting in the line of duty was May 8, 1986. The memorial was dedicated November 1, 1987, with 300 people in attendance.

Other Shirley residents have served Hancock and Henry Counties in elective office. Carolyn Grass served as County Clerk for two terms 1990 and 1994. Bud (Calvin) Gray was elected Sheriff in 2006 and wife Jeanine Gray was elected to the County Council in 2018. John Jessup was elected County Commissioner in 2018 and 2020. David Estell also served as Henry County Coroner

Do you remember Martha Beckenholdt. She was born in Dearborn County near Lawrenceburg Indiana. She graduated from Ball State University completing her studies in three years. From 1934-37 she served in a secretarial position in the law office of William, A. McClellan. In 1941 she was employed as a office clerk with the newly organized Greenfield Gas Company. On October 1 1943 she became Secretary Treasurer of the Corporation. Upon the death of Mr. McClellan in 1960 she was elected President of the Corporation and remained in the position until it was sold in 1967. Martha was very active in many volunteer organizations in Greenfield, Hancock county and the greater community. She served for many years as the Treasurer of the Hancock County Historical Society. It was with her impetus that the Log Jail and Philadelphia Church was moved to Riley Park

Enough. I have told everything that I know and some things I don't. Talk to me at jskvarenina@hotmail.com or at the Daily Reporter

2021-12-17

Sheriffs 1876-1929

By Joe Skvarenina

During William Thomas's tenure as Sheriff William Frost was found dead in 1876 a result of a falling tree. He was hunting and climbed a tree hoping to spot a fox but one of the limbs proved unable to support his weight. The sheriff and coroner were usually called to investigate such an event. A young man of Reedy was killed by his father also in 1876. The older gentlemen had consumed too much whiskey and became enraged at the son's claim he was too bossy.

In 1878 and 1880 William H. Thompson was elected as sheriff. Prior to that time, he served as deputy to Sheriff William Thomas. Also, that years a horrendous event happened in the murders of Sarah Wilson and her niece. the girl was only six years old. This event happened June 7th in Green Township and no guilty party was ever found and ever charged with the crime.

In 1882 William Lewis came into office. This was the year that the Binford History of Hancock County was published. It was during this time that natural gas was discovered, and the county began a period of rapid growth. Sheriff Lewis would have to deal with a influx of workers looking for jobs in new industries. As a result, the population of Hancock County became more diverse and law enforcement would need to expand.

U.S. Jackson served as Sheriff from 1884 to 1888 when Benjamin Pauley was elected. Marshall Smith was to enter the office in 1896. Noah Spegal served 1896 to 1898. During his term more railroads were added to the county and better transportation brought in more people and industry.

William Pauley became Sheriff in 1898 and held office until Lewis Larabee took over in 1900. John Carlton held the office of sheriff from 1904 until 190 and was replaced by James Sample. The year 1914 brought John T. Rash to the office of Hancock County Sheriff.

John H. Carlton, a democrat, was Sheriff for four years from 1905-1909. He lived in Greenfield while serving as Sheriff but moved to Maxwell in 1909. At that time, he went into the grain and elevator business with Frank Brandenburg.

Mack Warrum was a member of one of the first families to settle in Hancock County. He served as a lumber jack in the Michigan woods and served in the army for three years before returning to his Jackson Township home. later he volunteered for the Spanish American War. He was elected for Sheriff in 1912 and reelected in 1914. He was a democrat.

Sheriff John Mulvihill in 1919 arrested man from Indianapolis named Higgins who was smuggling a load of whiskey through Hancock County near Boyd Schoolhouse. Purchased at Cincinnati at a cost of \$1,102, the whiskey was said to be a typical weekly load. Also, mayor Ora Myers and Deputy Comstock arrested Homer and Moody Bridgewater for bootlegging. Whiskey was concealed in a corn crib.

In 1925 officers raided the King Tut Barbecue Stand on Strawboard Hill and found a glass jug half full of liquor. The proprietor David McCormack was arrested, and his bond fixed at \$3,000. Harry Comstock was elected Sheriff in 1925 and 1927. In 1925 the Daily Reporter carried an article about the robbery of the New Palestine Bank. It seemed that some local men apprehended the suspected robbers at Gem Road and Sheriff Comstock was called to arrest them. Apparently, several iron bars over the rear window of the bank had been sewed though and tracks in the snow were made by a man wearing rubber boots. A suspect was caught with the rubber boots which matched the tracks No mentioned was made how much was taken from the bank.

In 1929 Mr. John Nigh was installed as Sheriff. He was the first Republican to be elected sheriff. Enough. I have told you everything that I know and some things I don't. Talk to me.

2021-12-10

Sheriff 1858-1874

By Joe Skvarenina

Mordecai Millard served as sheriff 1858 a period that saw the establishment of the Hancock County Democrat as a local newspaper. This was also the period which led up to the Civil War. The Hancock Democrat reported fist fights and confrontations in the streets of Greenfield over the issues of slavery and tariffs. It was difficult for the sheriff to keep the peace among residents having diverging views. Millard was replaced by Taylor Thomas as Hancock County Sheriff in 1860. The sheriff was occupied with problems developing between families and neighbors over the troubles between the North and South. Many families came from the area of Virginia and North Carolina as well as Kentucky. Others hailed from the New England States and Middle Colonies, and they held beliefs that were strongly anti-slavery. There were shouting matches and fist fights in the streets (Hancock Democrat 1859-1863). Those involved often spent over night in jail to cool off.

The year 1863 brought William Caldwell to the Sheriff's office. The war ended in 1864 and soldiers were returning home by 1865. Greenfield and Hancock County continued to deal with unruly behavior and brawls as the aftermath of the Civil War still lingered with residents.

During this time, it was believed that one local resident cared for the husband's brother who had fought on the side of the south and managed to get to Greenfield after he was injured. If discovered this family would have been charged with treason, had they been discovered.

In January 1866 all the funds in the Treasurer's safe were taken in a daring robbery. There were no banks so many people put their funds in the county safe. The County Treasurer was absolved of the crime. A man named Livingston alias Williams was later found guilty of the crime. William Wilkins replaced Caldwell in 1868. This was an era of rapid development in Hancock County. In 1864 contract were let for a new jail. The building was completed in 1871

In 1870 Jared Meek the first white child born in Greenfield, was a candidate for Sheriff on the Republican ticket. He was defeated by William Wilkins. Sheriff Wilkins died during his second term and was replaced by George Sample. Robert Brown replaced George Sample in the Sheriff's office in time to investigate the murder of Sam Derry. Sam was killed in a fight with his sister and her husband over the ownership of a small gosling. This happened in 1873 in northern Center Township.

In 1874 the Grange was organizing an independent county ticket which backed the appeal of salary grabs the sheriff's reduced salary would be \$ 1,200.00.

Enough. I have told you everything that I know and some things I don't. Talk to me at jskvarenina@hotmail.com or the Daily Reporter.

2021-12-03

Horse Thieves, Rody's, Car-Mac's

By Joe Skvarenina

Have you ever heard of the National Horse Thief Association. The sixty sixth annual session was held on October 5-6, 1926, in Franklin Indiana. This organization according to the publication was to cooperate with all citizens, officials and or organizations in the county and state in maintaining the supremacy of law and securing its proper enforcement. It was the duty of the Horse Thief Detective Association to uphold the actions and to assist the sheriffs, police officers, prosecuting attorneys and courts in the protection of our citizenship against the invasion of murderer, banditry, thief, and felon and insist on the apprehension and conviction of such criminals. The real aim was to gain the confidence of the courts and peace officers, legislature, and the law-abiding citizens of Indiana. In addition, according to their publication the sheriffs of some counties were ready to appoint the members as deputies if they are recommended by the Association. Our own Ora Myers from Greenfield was a delegate, and he was a member Hancock Horse Detective Thief Association No. 126. Myers was mayor of Greenfield 1910-1914 and 1917-1921. He was an attorney and Greenfield Postmaster. In Hancock County had the following chapters: Brandywine #26 ,30 members; Buck Creek #30, 19 members; Fortville #96, 110 members; Hancock #126, 124 members; Gem #179, 95 members; McCordsville #28 ,39 members; New Palestine # 113, 80 members; and Carrolton #34, 34 members. Did you ever hear of this organization? The year 1926 was the height of the Klan period throughout Indiana. I have heard it said by several people in the community that it was a cover for the Klan. According to James Madison book on Indiana History, "The Klan first appeared in Indiana in 1920 and by 1923 was organizing Klaven's and holding rallies and parades throughout the state. Membership by that summer numbered around hundred thousand Hoosiers, making Indiana one of the nation's largest Klan strongholds."

In the 1950s, and into the 60s, the building on the southeast corner of North and State Streets I have seen photos of the Jeffries and Son Livery on the that corner." In addition, in 1922 the Greenfield City Directory shows a listing for O.H. Monger Ford, 25 North State which is the old address of the Ashley's Carpet site now gone. The site is now a parking lot.

Enough. I have told you everything that I know and some things I don't. Talk to me at Jskvarenina@hotmail.com or the Daily Reporter.

2021-11-26

Goats

By Joe Skvarenina

The Gooding Tavern, on the southwest corner of State and Main in Greenfield had various very important visitors like former President Martin Van Buren and Henry Clay. The site is the current location of the Greenfield City Hall. The Gooding Tavern was begun in 1832 by Joseph Chapman and later additions were added by Asa Gooding. It was run for many years by Gooding's wife Matilda. Another, the Guymon Housel was built in the 1840's was destroyed by a fire in 1900 and now the site is an empty parking lot beside the Lincoln Pancake House. The second-floor balcony at the Guymon House was an excellent space for public speeches. Mary Landis was an earlier tavern keeper in Charlottesville sat at her window and counted ninety prairie schooners going west on the National Road and this property is still there used as a family home. There was an Inn in Cleveland which also served as a restaurant. At one time it was the academy which was run by Roscoe Thomas. It is also currently a home. The long-gone Dunbar House on the corner of State and Main was the site of a Civil War argument and knifing. I am sure that there is more. The Gooding Tavern was first named the Dunbar House.

Dr. Gary Wright tells us about Billie Goat Hill in Shirley. Billie Goat Hill was located on the west side of Shirley around the site of the old Shirley Foundry and Radiator Plant According to Pastor Wright the reason it was called Billie Goat Hill because the site smelled like rotten eggs. A chemical used in the manufacturing of radiators caused the smell.

Do you remember Early Drug Store? It was located at the Christian Church parking lot. Drug stores in the good old days carried paint, wallpaper, notions and even men's clothing. V.F. Early, Druggist was listed in the 1880's business directory. This drugstore was owned at one time by Samuel Cappen. I remember going to drug store to get a phosphate when I was a kid.

James Whitcomb Riley was at one time a sign painter. Reportedly the last sign he painted was for J Banks in 1878. Mr. Banks business was hauling merchandise to and from Cincinnati. The sign is still in existence in the Riley Home. Go see it.

Enough I told you everything that I know and some things I don't. Talk to me at jskvarenina@hotmail.com or at the Daily Reporter.

2021-11-19

Justice of the Peace

By Joe Skvarenina

The 1852 Constitution of Indiana provided for the election of a justice of the peace for four years and a constable for two years to uphold the laws in a township. This offered the opportunity for an inexpensive remedy to petty grievances either criminal or civil. The latter who served as executive officer and corresponds with the county sheriff in his duties.

Joshua Shelby was a native of Union county Indiana. He was born June 26, 1815. His family came to Sugar Creek Township in 1835. He served in the capacity of Trustee and Justice of the Peace in the township over a period of six years. He was elected sheriff in 1852 over G.W. Sample as a popular candidate and after six months he resigned for the "more congenial" health pursuit of agriculture. He was a Whig when he was elected to be sheriff. He was married to Nancy Dunn and had six children. He and his wife lived a hard pioneer life. He attended no church. He was rough in speech and exterior, but he was known as a social, kindhearted man who was well disposed.

John Osborn replaced Shelby in 1853 and during his term the log jail currently in Riley Park was constructed. The Log was moved several times and was located at the site of the Gas Company before being removed to Riley Park. The Commissioner let the contract in March 1853 to Jonathan Dunbar the former sheriff. This building served until 1871 when the brick residence and jail was built east of the courthouse. William Curry became sheriff in 1854.

Morgan Chandler came to Hancock County in 1851 and engaged in teaching. In 1855 he was the clerk in the store of G.G. Tague at \$10 per month. In 1855 he was elected as sheriff. At the end of his term he returned to farming until 1861 when he was elected as Clerk of the Hancock Circuit Court. In 1871 he and four other gentlemen started the Greenfield Banking Company and served as cashier. In 1880 he served in the Indiana House. Chandler was the sheriff at the time of the first Hancock County fair.

Enough. I have told you everything that I know and some things I don't. Talk to me at jksvarenina@hotmail.com or the Daily Reporter.

2021-11-12

Fall Creek Trial

By Joe Skvarenina

Hancock County, Indiana, was formed out of territory ceded by the Delaware Indians as part of the New Purchase in the Treaty of St. Mary's in 1818. The State Legislature divided the land Jan. 22, 1820, into Wabash and Delaware Counties. Thus, the first Sheriff of the territory later known as Hancock County would have been the Sheriff of Delaware County. In 1823 Delaware County was divided into Madison and Delaware Counties. It was in 1824 one of the earliest crises took place. A group of white men seeing two Indian families with furs killed the entire party of warriors, squaws, and the children for their furs. Word spread and the entire frontier feared a massive Indian uprising. The Sheriff notified the Governor and the militia to help capture the men responsible and they were successful. The Sheriff raised some of the militia from the part of Madison which is now northern Hancock to guard the prisoners at the county seat which was Pendleton. A trial was held, and three of the four men were found guilty. This was the first time that white men were found guilty of murdering Indians and put to death.

Hancock County was divided from Madison in 1828. John Foster the first Hancock County Sheriff was born in South Carolina in 1796 and migrated to Indiana in 1816. He was employed as assistant to the government surveyors for several years. In 1828 he came to Hancock County and settled in the Greenfield area and farmed. He was appointed Sheriff by the Governor in 1828. The county provided the first jail during his term. He served in the Indiana House of Representatives in 1838 and 1851. He was elected Treasurer of the county in 1854. Samuel Duncan was elected Sheriff in 1832. He was sheriff when the first jail burned down. In 1833 John Hays an ex-Sheriff of Rush County became insane, committed battery, and wandered into Hancock County. he was arrested and sent to jail for his own protection. While incarcerated Hayes burned to death in the first log jail on the south side of the public square. According to the record he set the fire and was consumed by it before he could be rescued.

Enough I have told you everything that I know and some things I don't. Talk to me at jskvarenina@hotmail.com or the Daily Reporter.

2021-11-05

The Brady Gang

By Joe Skvarenina

Clarence E. Watson served as Hancock County Sheriff for two terms 1934 and 1938. In 1936 he led the democrat ticket one month after the October 11, 1936 Brady Gang jail break.

The Brady gang was in the Hancock Jail under Sheriff's Watson custody on a change of venue from Marion county. They were awaiting trial for the murder of a police officers and perhaps others. The Brady gang was notorious, and some claimed more dangerous than the Dillinger gang.

The break happened on Sunday morning. It was Sheriff Watson's custom to do the housekeeping of the jail cell. Watson had emptied the paper baskets from the cell, and he had opened the heavy door to put the baskets back in the cell. When he did that gang members Brady, Shafer and Dahlhoffer were eating breakfast with their back to the door. When Watson opened the door, Brady jumped up with a yell and threw himself into the door opening. Watson knocked him back into the cell and stepped inside to close the door behind him to keep them from escaping. At this point the other two convicts joined Brady. after some investigation it was later learned that the gang had succeeded in breaking a piece of iron from the cell and had covered it with a T shirt. Brady had struck Sheriff Watson on the head with the weapon when Brady and Sheriff were fighting to gain control of it. The other two convicts were doing what they could to prevent Watson from winning the struggle. Watson's sister, Edna Tinney, who was doing the cooking and the housekeeping, ran to Watson's office to get his revolver. She had just succeeded in opening the drawer of Watson's desk where he kept the revolver, and just got ahold of it when Dahlhoffer, who had followed her, threw her out of the way and took the gun. So as Watson and Brady were fighting down the hallway over the iron bar, Dahlhoffer came along and pistol-whipped Sheriff Watson. Watson and Brady fought down the hallway, rolled down the front steps, and ended up with Sheriff Watson sitting on him and hanging on to the iron bar in the street in front of the jail. At that time Mr. and Mrs. Edgar Ridlen , owner of the Columbia Barber Shop, now the current site of the Greenfield Bank, drove by and saw the fight. He stopped to assist Sheriff Watson and he succeeded in knocking the gun out of Dahlhoffer's hand but unfortunately it landed near convict who picked it up again. After a struggle he shot at Ridlen, and the bullet went through his jacket lapel. There was another pistol whipping with the butt of the gun and the Sheriff was knocked unconscious for a short time. The gang escaped in Ridlen's car. After Sheriff Watson gained consciousness, he got up to the front door of the jail and told his wife to call the State Police.

The Brady Gang was apprehended in Bangor Maine. Brady and Shafer were shot to death attempting to escape arrest. Dahlhoffer was arrested and flown back to Indiana; tried, found guilty and was electrocuted. It took almost a full year after the Greenfield escape to bring the Brady Gang to justice. The jail all this happened was the current prosecutor's office

The Brady Gang were bank robbers and robbed bank around here and one or two in Ohio. One of the banks the Gang robbed was in Carthage, Indiana.

Enough. I have told you everything that I know and some things I don't. Talk to me at jskvarenina@hotmail.com or the Daily Reporter.

2021-10-29

The National Road

By Joe Skvarenina

My mom and dad liked to go for rides on the weekends with no destination in mind. Gas was cheap in those days, and we often ended on the National Road. Does anyone remember the spring on the south side of 40 as you entered Knightstown? There was a pipe coming out of the hill and you could stop and get a drink of water. I have looked for some remnants of the site to no avail. Let me know.

The work on the road in Indiana began 1829 and reached the Terre Haute in 1834. The survey party was told to lay out the road as an 80-foot width road with the middle 30 feet to be graded to be macadamized with ten inches of stone for use of stagecoaches and mail coaches. Jonathan Knight led the federal surveying party into Indiana. One interesting town along the way called Vandalia was located several miles north of the National Road so they moved the town south to share in the expected commerce and profits. The new city was called Cambridge City.

The express coaches could carry a letter from Washington to Indianapolis in three days and to St. Louis in five days. A letter in the regular mail would take twice as long. Towns grew up around the taverns along the old route like Starr's and Sloane's in Richmond, the Mansion House in Richmond, and the Huddleston House in Cambridge City. Huddleston House and the Mansion House can still be viewed today. The federal government operated the old pike until 1848 and turned over to the state to keep the road in shape.

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2021-10-15

By Joe Skvarenina

Mitch Pendlum and Dave Heller have a steak dinner wager over the location of the office and home of Jesse L. Dobbins long term Justice of the Peace in Greenfield. Dobbins served in that position from 1955-1971. In those days you would go to the JP Office to pay your traffic tickets and the office which was usually in the home. The location was 114 Walnut Street from 1961-1963. In 1942 he lived at 604 N. Spring. Who can explain the Justice of the Peace system? I know that my mom and Dad were married by one. Thanks to Paul McNeil for the detective work. Paul does a masterful job helping people do research at the Hancock Public Library.

Phil Slaughter Charlottesville Class of 1955 writes that he and Larry Fox had a great meeting and meal with the other class members in Columbus. The school that they attended was built in Charlottesville in 1936. The cost was \$125,000 and replaced an earlier structure which was destroyed by fire. The structure still stands today. In 1959 the School Reorganization Act required school systems to have over 1,000 students. A committee drew up boundaries and Brown, Jackson and Blue River were in Eastern Hancock system. Prior to that basketball slowed the merger of the High Schools until it was mandated

Mark Sullivan shares with us the following item from the Greenfield Evening Star Newspaper. On July 26, 1905, it was reported in the Greenfield Evening Star that John Spinks a farmer southwest of town had his yellow legged chickens ripe for the skillet, a buggy harness, and two dozen eggs were stolen from his farm. John had left home for two days and when he returned it was all gone. According to Spinks the thieves could keep the eggs and the buggy harness, but he wanted his chickens returned.

The Hancock County Historical Society was founded in 1964. The first organized effort of the Society was to furnish a lighted display case with Blue River Townships artifacts in the Courthouse hallway. Following the first year of membership the Hancock County Historical Society had 525 charter members.

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2021-10-08

One Room School Houses

By Joe Skvarenina

The Denny One Room School stands on the corner of Fortville Pike and 700 North and today it is a residence. A general rule was the school was named after a family member who donated the land. The Denny School was built in 1885 by Vernon Township Trustee Solomon Jackson and was not the first school building at the site. An earlier frame building was destroyed by fire in 1884. The first teacher at the Denny School was Napoleon Whitaker in 1878. The last teacher was Bernice Canaday in 1919. James Denny, the school's namesake, was a Revolutionary War soldier who suffered through Valley Forge and later settled in Hancock County. He is buried in Olvey Cemetery off Meridian Road. His feet had been amputated because of his Valley Forge service and the resulting frost bite.

There was also a one room school in located in McCordsville Park across the street from the McCordsville Cemetery. This school was the first graded school in the county. It was built in 1874, with two stories and four rooms. The Trustee was Andrew Hagan. It burned and was replaced by another building. The second building was torn down in 1893 for a fourth building which burned in 1902. A fifth building was erected in 1927 by Trustee Arza Kineman. This building served first grade thru high school. There is a plaque in the park which commemorates the history of the McCordsville School before the consolidation into the Mt. Vernon system. By 1914 the one room schoolhouses in Vernon Townships began to disappear.

By the way in case, you might be wondering the only remaining one room schoolhouse in Buck Creek Township is the Black Hawk School built in 1882 by John Eastes. I replaced two previous schools. It is now a home located 500N and 300W.

Enough. I have told you everything that I know and some things I don't. Talk to me Jskvarenina@hotmail.com or the Daily Reporter.

2021-10-01

By Joe Skvarenina

I receive a lot of questions about the Underground Railroad. (UGRR) in Hancock County. Since it was illegal to help fugitive slaves, no records were kept, or maps drawn. But I am relatively sure there was some activity in Hancock County. But if you go to Greensboro in Henry County you can trace UGRR. Conductors were Antislavery activists who made it their business to receive, forward, conceal and protect fugitive slaves.

Seth Hinshaw (1787-1865) was active on the Underground Railroad, but also operated a free labor store in Greensboro. A free labor store only sold items which were produced without the help of slave labor. Instead of cotton and sugar the store might sell wool and maple syrup.

Along with this work, Hinshaw also erected "Liberty Hall," which held the anti-slavery meetings, which Hinshaw ran. The last meeting of the abolitionists here was in 1852, but the building remained until 1880. Frederick Douglas and George Washington Julian famous abolitionists were speakers at Liberty Hall.

A large Quaker settlement, it was an active abolitionist and UGRR center in southeastern Henry County. Much of what is known about the area is thanks to the writings of Daniel Newby, the son of Thomas Newby, an active conductor for Fountain City or Newport Indiana. "Being sold down the river" was a phrase originally used to describe one big reason why slaves in the upper south ran away.

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2021-09-24

One Room School Houses

By Joe Skvarenina

Driving around the countryside you can still see many of the one room school in various stages of repair. Not all one room schoolhouses had a single room for instruction, some had more. One room refers to all eight grades being taught in one room. If you travel west into Philadelphia there is an old schoolhouse on the North side of the road. It is the District #1 School and was built by Sugar Creek Township Trustee James Manche in 1891. The building served as a community center and later was converted to a residence by the Charnstorm family. The last class in that school was in 1925-26. Mrs. Wade Fuller was the last teacher. Teachers in those days were called Professors. Two famous teachers at District #1 was John Felt who later became a lawyer and judge and George Richman who wrote a county history and was Superintendent of Schools.

Another one room schoolhouse along 40 was the Brown School District #2 established in 1882. Originally built two miles west of Philadelphia It was moved two miles east of Gem on north side of National Road. The Township Trustee was William Barnard. It was moved later south of 40 on the west side of the road and is a residence. Their last year for students was 1921-22 and the last teacher was Gladys Knoop.

In the good old days, the Township Trustee also served as the school superintendent. As Trustee he paid the bills and hired the teachers along with his other duties.

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2021-09-17

By Joe Skvarenina

Jon Slaughter tells us that "my grandfather, Edward Slaughter started the first library in Wilkinson, Indiana around 1918. He passed away around that same time and is buried there in Wilkinson." This was probably the Brown Township school library. All that is left of the old school is the gym. The first school in Brown Township was built by Moses McCray in 1834 at the current location of the McCray Cemetery. It was a log building.

In 1879 Wilkinson became a boom town with the coming of the railroad. Soon houses, a grain elevator, hotel and restaurant were built as were grocery stores and a drug store. A supply of natural gas as well as the coming of the Honey Bea Interurban Lines brought further growth. There were two glass factories in town. In 1883 Wilkinson was platted and incorporated in 1914. When it was incorporated 340 residents lived in town which is about 100 less than live there today. It is also interesting to note that on May 12, 1886, Wilkinson was partially destroyed by a cyclone with one person being killed. On June 25, 1902, one of the glass factories was blown down by another storm.

Did you know that at one time there was an Episcopal church held in Loudonbeck's Hall until a building was erected in 1887. It was dedicated St. Mary's. After several years, the building was sold to the Christian church and the mission was abandoned. The Church of Christ which was founded in 1889 bought the building and worship there until the structure became dilapidated. They dedicated a new building in 1913. I also know that the Church Apartments were at one time the Church of Christ building though I don't know the sequence and if this was the 1913 building? Also, Susie's Pizza was at one time the location of the bank. The funeral home, at least the old section, was the Interurban station. Wilkinson was platted by Thomas and Elnathan Wilkinson in 1883. It was incorporated in 1914. There were 340 residents at the time.

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2021-09-10

By Joe Skvarenina

My father was a depression baby born in 1926. You could really tell because he saved string, straightened nails, along with saving aluminum foil, and used bread bags. You know the type. The children of the depression wasted nothing. It was hard times and they never forgot it. During the 1920's the Great Depression was slow to come to Hancock County and when it did there was little warning. The first indication is when the tax assessor's report in the first half of the 1930's showed a decrease in taxable income. The result was call for a tax cut. Before the early thirties, three banks had failed, and unemployment was increasing, and some businesses cut back to five days a week. The Framers National Bank of Wilkinson was the first to go under on September 19, 1930. The Fortville State Bank was closed to a receivership April 18, 1931. The Citizens Bank of Charlottesville was closed on March 30, 1934. According to one publication six banks were operating in Hancock County at the end of the thirties. Also, on March 1931 the T.H.I.& Traction Line or Interurban which ran through Greenfield to Indianapolis was a victim to the economic downturn.

Here is a list of some of the banks in the county at the time and when the banks were founded: Greenfield Banking Company 1871, First National Bank of Fortville 1906, Citizens Bank of Greenfield 1873, Capital State Bank 1898, Mohawk State Bank 1903, Willow Branch Bank 1913, New Palestine Bank 1892/1897, Hughes Bank 1881, Fortville State Bank, 1891, Farmers Bank Wilkinson and 1915 Citizens Bank Charlottesville 1913. You travel around the smaller towns and still see the older buildings in Mohawk, Wilkinson, and Willow Branch. This information provided courtesy "A History of Banking in Hancock County Indiana 1871-1976." Did Fortville at one time print their own currency?

Enough. I have told you everything that I know and some things I don't. Talk to me at jskvarenina@hotmail.com or the Daily Reporter.

2021-09-03

By Joseph Skvarenina

The Hancock County community has been rife with stories about the KKK. I normally don't want to give it any publicity, but I do believe that by and large that group itself is history in Hancock County. Bob Scherr from the Indianapolis Star inquires about the Klan connection with the New Palestine Dragons Mascot.

Paul McNeil from Hancock County Public Library writes:

"A librarian from IPL called me asking about the link between the New Palestine Dragons and the KKK. I've heard the rumors but did not know of any proof that existed on the subject. As far as I know it's all hearsay/coincidence.

"I had heard that the original owner of the land was big in the Klan and donated it for the building of the school. Hence the mascot name. I checked the 1906 atlas that predates the 1919 NP High School, and the plot says School No. 4. So it seems the school already was established here but maybe not the total land.

"The first mention of the Dragons in the newspaper that I could find was in the early 1930s." I do believe that the story about New Palestine Dragons is urban legend and nothing more. I have looked and find no evidence to the contrary. Occasionally students will confront people with this myth, and it is simply not true.

In 1923 the Rev V.W. Blair, a former pastor of the Greenfield Christian Church, addressed a large crowd on the Hancock County Courthouse lawn on the mission of the Klan. The report said, "From the number of cards turned in to the organizer, it is evident we are soon to have a Klan in your midst, who will no doubt display a fiery cross in our midst."

Also in 1923, the Klan staged a demonstration in Greenfield. By 8 p.m. a crowd of 20,000 persons gathered on Main Street to watch the parade. There were several hundred Klansmen from Indianapolis, Knightstown, New Castle, Anderson, Franklin, Muncie, Elwood and other towns. A rally took place at the fairgrounds to witness the ceremonies, which were secret. The crowds were reported orderly. It was said that 6,040 cars left the fairgrounds that evening.

In 1925 a revival took place at the Greenfield Tabernacle on North Street; 50 members of the Klan attended the service and left a \$75 donation and a note of congratulations for the Rev. E.J. Bulgin, who conducted the revival. As the revival ended, a parade was staged by hundreds of persons carrying Bibles and American flags and led by the Presbyterian church band. I do believe the Greenfield Tabernacle is still in existence on North Street.

In 1928 Indiana Attorney General revoked the permit for the Klan to operate in Indiana, saying that the Klan had concealed its true purpose when applying for the permit.

In 1965 four men were arrested for distributing Klan literature around the courthouse.

Enough. I have told you all that I know and some things I don't. Talk to me.

2021-08-27

By Joseph Skvarenina

As Hancock County Historian I am working with Linda Dunn of the League of Woman Voters on placing an historical marker acknowledging the Kemmer Lynching in Greenfield. It is past time that this is done. It is the right thing to do.

Keemer had stopped at the Blue River Township farm of Wm Vaughn while the men were working in the field. Upon hearing Mrs. Vaughn scream, the men chased Keemer into Rush Co., where he was jailed and then moved to Greenfield due to rumors of a proposed lynching

In 1875 a mob of 160 masked, white men from Hancock, Rush, and Shelby counties subdued Sheriff Thomas and dragged William Keemer - a 26-year-old black man from Carthage - from his cell in the Greenfield jail and hung him at the county fair- grounds. His body was buried at the county farm pauper cemetery. His final words were "Men, you are doing wrong. There was no trial and no evidence or confession. The accusation was later recanted. No one was ever prosecuted for the murder of Mr. Kemmer.

Linda has continued to research Keemer's family and found some interesting tidbits from a historical perspective. The only direct descendants are from the line of Edgar Keemer, who were raised by Ophelia Brooks (maternal aunt) and Madison Bass. They have ties to both the Beech Settlement and the Roberts African American Settlements.

Edgar excelled in Knightstown, went to IU, and attended medical school before marrying and becoming a professor at Howard University. He quit Howard later and returned to Knightstown. Two daughters and one son excelled academically and professionally

The cost of the marker is \$2950, and it will be designed and produced by the Indiana Historical Society to match the other three markers in town. To date we have \$1975 committed. At the current time, the marker will be placed on the National Road around the location of the pauper cemetery. If interested in participating contact me at the Daily Reporter. Enough. Talk to me.

2021-08-20

Debs

By Joe Skvarenina

There are several cemeteries in the new jail area and Sue Baker's book provides us with the best descriptions. The Caldwell Cemetery is on the south side of US 40 between 400 and 500 East. It started in 1834 as a family burying ground. It is maintained by the township. There is also a Pauper Cemetery on the north side of US 40 East across the highway from Caldwell. There is no evidence of graves, but a grove of trees marks the burying ground. In 1887 the Hancock County Infirmary or Poor Farm was situated on the north side of US 40 and this area was used as a burying ground for deceased residents and the 1875 lynching victim William Kemmer. In the 1890's the Poor Farm was moved to the south side of the road. Legend has it that there is an unmarked burying ground at the back of this property by the old railroad tracks.

There was a P.R. Mallory Plant at 111 East Main Street in Greenfield during the 1960's. Do you remember it? The Greenfield Plant specialized in materials for the automotive industry. It produced 15000 parts per day for Autolite and the Ford Motor Companies. Also, did you know that in 1960 there were 16,800 telephone calls made in Greenfield per day. It was in 1957 that Greenfield joined the Indiana Bell family of exchanges. At that time, the Hopkins telephone numbers were adopted. In those days there were 4500 telephones in Greenfield including 3300 main phones and 1200 extensions. It was rumored in those days that push-button phones will replace the rotary dial.

I have been invited by the Riley Memorial Association in the past fall to lay the wreath at Riley's and William Lowe Bryan's graves at Crown Hill and the kids from Mt. Comfort school shown up to help. Later I took the tour of Riley's house on Lockerbie Street. Mr. Riley lived in this home for 23 years of his adult life. This facility has just built a new Visitors Center which features a new documentary on Riley. The film contains some of the snippets from the long-lost Indiana centennial film of 1916. It worth the trip just to see this film effort. I have been told that Riley was apolitical. But his close friend was Eugene V. Debs from Terre Haute. Debs first encountered organized labor in the rail yards of Terre Haute. Later he received national attention for his role in the Pullman Strike of 1894. After Debs helped found the American Socialist Party and ran repeatedly for President starting in 1900. In 1912 he received one million votes. In 1916 he won an Indiana Congressional seat. In 1918 he was jailed under the Espionage Act. In 1918 Debs was jailed for his antiwar beliefs. He was released in 1921 and died five years later in 1926.

Riley wrote..."Gene Debs-a man 'at stands and jest holds out in his two hand as warm a heart as ever beat betwixt here and the Judgment Seat."

Enough. I have told you everything that I know and some things I don't. Talk to me at jskvarenina@hotmail.com or the Daily Reporter

2021-08-13

William Wick

By Joe Skvarenina

Charlie White provides us with some very interesting stories from 1933. Do you know who was first buried in Park Cemetery? In 1933 the best evidence found it was a young man, 19 years old, and a son of William Sears who was the first adult. It seems that a baby brother passed away the same year of 1865. Mr. William Wishard who owned a shoe repair shop on Mount Street helped dig the grave. Mr. Wishard remembered it well for the undertaker cut notches in a stick showing the width length and depth for the grave. Also, in 1933 the city park board found an artesian well flowing in a two-inch stream in a small grove on the west side of Brandywine Park. The well was drilled by the city water employees and was pushed down seventy feet. I do believe that this is the city's current water supply. Last in 1933 chicken thieves were on the loose again southeast of Greenfield when Misters Price Scott and W.F. Thomas lost 150 fryers and hens to chicken thieves. Thanks Charlie. Charlie is gone now but his memory lives on.

The first person to die of record in Greenfield was Docia Spillman daughter of Benjamin Spillman who was one of the early settlers that helped lay out Greenfield. She died in 1828 and was the first person to be buried in the old cemetery on South Street. Many of the old graves are still there.

Do you know Scott Sirk who is the current Hancock county Circuit Court Judge? The first Circuit Court Judge for Hancock County was William Wick. In 1824 when Hancock County was part of Madison County; a group of nine Indians were peacefully camping on Fall Creek, white men cruelly killed the braves, squaws, and children. Known as the Fall Creek Massacre resulted in a trial where the whites were convicted of killing the Indians. This the first time that whites were convicted of killing Indians. The trial was held in a log courthouse at Pendleton. The Presiding Judge at the trial was William Wick. After being convicted some of the whites were executed. Mr. Rambo and Isaac Roberts helped build the courthouse and John L. Garwood was on the jury. All three were from Hancock County. Wick presided as Circuit Court Judge for four terms. he was also a Prosecuting Attorney in the Circuit and was eventually elected to Congress as a Democrat. He was appointed as Postmaster for Indianapolis by President Franklin Pierce. Wick feared blacks. He was a member of the American Colonization Society which supported blacks moving back to a Liberian Colony in Africa.

If you go to Pendleton today there is a monument in Falls Park commemorating the event. It is on the north side by the old swimming area. Also, in the Hancock county courthouse there are photos of all the past judges except William Wick. It seems that none can be found.

Enough. I have told you everything that I know and some things I don't. Talk to me at jskvarenina@hotmail.com or the Daily Reporter.

2021-08-06

Whetzel Trace

by Joe Skvarenina

Did you know that when Hancock County was founded in 1828 there were only three townships, Blue River Brandywine, and Sugar Creek? These townships were organized at the separation of Hancock from Madison and originally extended to the county lines. Other townships included Union, Harrison, and Worth Townships. Did you ever hear of them before? In 1853 the county commissioners divided and reconfigured the townships to leave the nine civil townships we have today.

Did you know that Brandywine Township which was organized in 1828 at the time the Hancock County was established and was at one time the whole center third of the county? The Brandywine stream and township were named by Jacob Whetzel Indian scout and trader whose trace went through the township. If you go south on State Route 9 you will come across a historical sign in Shelby County which tells you about Whetzel Trace. It was a trail from Whitewater River in Laurel which terminated at the bluffs of the White River in Morgan county. It was the first east-west road in central Indiana. Whetzel got the permission from Chief Anderson to build the trace on Delaware Indian land. It was completed in 1819. Whetzel and his son decided to settle at the terminus at Waverly. He died at the site in 1827. One of the mazing features of the Trace was that it traveled west on an angle of four degrees, the western point only five miles north of the eastern point, a remarkable achievement for a backwoods Indian fighter with no training in engineering.

Earlier in his life Jacob and his brother Lewis were captured by Mingo Indians but escaped in a few days. At the age of 16 Jacob and brother Lewis served as scouts for General St Clair in his campaign against Indian Villages in the Northwest Territory. He took part in the Battle of Tippecanoe. His accomplishments as an early pioneer earn him a place of honor in Indiana history.

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2021-07-30

By Joe Skvarenina

Who was Lorenzo Dow? He was described as a crude, gaunt, hairy person with a long flowing beard and a hypnotic eye. He took the whole frontier as his parish. He traveled throughout Ohio, Indiana, Illinois, Tennessee, Georgia and back again. He would preach to large crowds at Camp Meetings or to a single family from a tree stump. In 1819 he passed through Indiana and eventually spent some time in Hancock county living in a cave in Buck Creek township. For thirty years he traveled the frontier distributing Gospel tracts and bottled medicine and he was known as "Crazy Dow." Always ill and unkempt he could clown in the pulpit and prostrate whole congregations with laughter. Pioneers named their children after him and he sold his tracts on heaven, hell, marriage, Masonry, and popery along with bottles of Lorenzo Dow's Family Medicine. This elixir he claimed removed obstructions of the stomach and bowels and problems of the liver. It was made from Bloodroot, Nitra Salts, and sulphonic acid and all dissolved in boiling water and stirred with a wooden paddle. He would travel from place-to-place leaving schedules for his upcoming preaching at wells in taverns, crossroads and at other localities. People would show up at his camp meetings in large numbers. Some say he was the father of the camp meeting, but he was preceded by the first Great Awakening of Barton Stone at Cain Ridge in Kentucky.

In 1832 he was presented to President Jackson in the White House with warning about impending death. In 1833 he was in Washington again to inform the President about a papish plot. It was there that the Methodist circuit rider, Dow, died. When asked to describe his domination Dow said he was a Methodist with a Quaker filing.

Lorenzo Dow was an example of the early circuit rider who brought religion to the Indiana frontier and proceeded the establishment of a church. Many were Methodist and some Presbyterians. All apostles of the road who spent many lonely days of horseback bringing God to isolated cabins in the Indiana wilderness.

Enough. I told you everything that I now and some things I don't. Talk to me at jskvarenina@hotmail.com or the Daily Reporter.

2021-07-23

By Joe Skvarenina

Dana Studer writes, "A neighbor and my husband were chatting. He told my husband that the property to the north of the Greenfield Water Utility was a stop on the Underground Railroad. There are tunnels under the property that still lead to the property where the utility sits now. I was told years ago that the property was a greenhouse and sold flowers for funerals many years ago. It was at 337 South Meek and named Forests Greenhouses. On dry summer days the outline of a foundation can still be seen. Any truth to any of that." I am skeptical about an underground site in Greenfield. But someone could prove me wrong. I wonder about the tunnels. I know that the Forests Greenhouses were at the site.

That's an interesting question because of the nature of the Underground Railroad few people would have confessed to being part of the endeavor. I know if you find a Society of Friends or Quaker Congregation established around the 1840's you will probably have discovered a congregation which was involved with the Underground Railroad. I believe that the Milburn Home called Pineview in Brandywine Township was probably a stop on the Underground Railroad. Richard Milburn and wife arrived in Hancock County around 1835. Brandywine Township was sparsely settled at the time and the whole Hancock territory was unbroken wilderness in which numerous Indians wild deer, bears, snakes, wolves, owls, turkeys, opossums, raccoons, panthers, and porcupines roamed at will. I believe that the Pineview has a hiding place behind the chimney for runaway slaves. If you go south of Charlottesville to the Carthage area you will find Walnut Ridge Friends Church which had a basement area which was used as a hiding place for escaped slaves. In fact the church was burned by the Klan and rebuilt. Carthage is across the line from Blue River Township.

An old book by Thomas Newby called "Reminiscences of Pioneer Carthage" tell us there was a station at Rushville that took slaves to Carthage and then Knightstown. The goal was to reach Canada which forbid slavery. So more than likely places in Blue River Township did exist. Can anyone add to this? Candy Atkins believes that her house on Meridian Road was a stop on the Underground Railroad.

Enough. I have told you everything that I know and some things I don't. Talk to me at jskvarenina@hotmail.com or the Daily Reporter.

2021-07-16

By Joe Skvarenina

The original plat of Mohawk was made on January 25, 1883, by Catherine and Adam F. Wilson. I am sure it was called Mohawk because of the Indian village at the site long ago. Today it is a small town which has seen businesses come and go. At different times there have been grocers, hardware dealers, and a drug concerns in Mohawk. In the past there was a post office maintained with no rural routes. The Mohawk Bank, a private institution was organized September 1, 1913, with the capital of \$12,000 was later bought out by Hancock County Bank & Trust which today is PNC. The location of the old Mohawk State Bank is still there. The Lenape tribe No. 224 of the Improved Order of Red Man was organized at Mohawk on May 9, 1896. After the railroad was constructed McConnell & Wilson erected a grain elevator which burned. Later Newman and Barnard erected another one called the Mohawk Elevator which is now also gone. In addition, a sawmill was established in 1880 and later operated by Oliver A Newman and his son Frank, under the name of the Mohawk Lumber Company. In 1909 the company was rebuilt after a fire and eventually went into the construction of Greyhound vans and truck bodies. The Mohawk Methodist church started out as an Evangelical United Brethren Church. This church on the Buck Creek side was organized in 1894 with the present structure being erected in 1896. Mohawk is both in Buck Creek and Center Townships.

The most famous citizen of the area was Rev. Lorenzo Dow. Some early publications describe him as a truly both pious and eccentric. In 1826 the Records office shows that Dow entered the north-west quarter of section thirty-five in township sixteen north, in range five east, containing one hundred and sixty acres which when entered was part of Madison County but is now in Buck Creek Township. It was reported that Dow lived on his entry for a short time in a bank of the Buck Creek about 10-12 feet high on the farm where he dug a cave in which to live. Dow a Methodist preached in Greenfield. I am fascinated by Lorenzo Dow. What do you know about him? He preached throughout Indiana Georgia and Tennessee. Some say that Dow was the originator of the Camp Meeting which caught on during the Great Awakening.

Enough. I have told you everything that I know and some things I don't. Talk to me at jskvarenina@hotmail.com or the Daily Reporter.

2021-07-09

Fountaintown Gas

By Joe Skvarenina

Early in the 1954 upon sensing a need for safe and reliable natural gas system in Morristown and other small communities' efforts were made to provide such service. Most towns had a gas company, but none of the small-town gas companies could be depended upon to provide adequate gas for domestic need or commercial and industrial growth. In 1900 Morristown was served by the Citizens Natural Gas and Oil Company with 23 wells and 400 shareholders.

In 1967 the rights to the name of Fountaintown Gas were purchased and a system was constructed to serve thirteen communities and 4,000 customers. The Fountaintown Gas Company under the leadership of Bob Wortman started with two customers. In 1969 Fountaintown Gas purchased Master Gas Company in Shirley. At the time of purchase there were 70 customers. In the early days of Fountaintown Gas in Shirley, Town Councilman Dallas Turner sold gas to individuals and his wife acted as a collection agent. To date Fountaintown Gas has 396 customers in Shirley. The largest at the time being Shirley Foods. Fountaintown Gas also serves Wilkinson, Kennard and Sulphur Springs. It also services four towns in Ripley and Dearborn Counties when in 1981 it purchased Southeastern Gas with headquarters in Milan.

Do you know how the Blue Bird Restaurant in Morristown got its name? It seems there was a contest at the high school in 1930's to choose a name for the coffee shop and Chase Webb was the winner coming up with the name Blue Bird. You got a \$1.00 for his efforts. The Blue Bird was not always an eatery. At one time Pauley's Variety Store was at the site with a pool room and barber shop at the location. Pauley's Variety was owned by Jane Pauley's ancestors.

It is always a pleasure to spend the afternoon with the honorary Mayor of Morristown, Bob Wortman. He has done much for Hancock and Shelby County communities spanning the areas of critical care at the hospitals to libraries and children's reading. He is a good steward. Thanks, Bob.

I told you everything that I know and some things I don't. Talk to me at jskvarenina@hotmail.com or the Daily Reporter.

2021-07-02

The Octagon House

By Joe Skvarenina

This May I went to the Strawberry Festival in Shirley, and I am continually amazed at the Octagon House. I hope you can visit. It is a great place to take the kids.

Jane Ross Reeves the builder of the Octagon house was a descendent of Betsy Ross who made the first American flag and David Livingston the missionary. In 1993 the first meeting was held to discuss moving the house. Thirty people attended. Seven people attended the second meeting.

The home was moved to give the community young and old a place to gather, have fun. It took 3 years to get the house moved and on the new location.

Reeves family had an 800-acre farm. Had an orchard that had nut trees on it and had lots of flowers. They had 12 children. Jane Reeves saw a picture in a magazine of an octagon house and like it. So, when it came time that the family could build a bigger house, she wanted an octagon house.

The family started out in a log cabin, then built another home. After her husband died is when she built the 3rd family home...the octagon house. She hired a contractor out of Fortville. They used the trees off the farm for lumber which was walnut, oak, and poplar. It took 20 months to build and cost \$2,300-2,500. It cost over \$350,000 to move and restore.

In 1995 the men on the Octagon House Foundation were preparing to move the house into Shirley. A recent auction to fund the moved netted about \$3,000 of the \$20,000 needed to make the journey. The house was donated by the Octagon House Foundation by David and Frances Walden the current owners. Darrell Deck, Don Dennis Westrich, Lamoine Harrell, Barney and Bob Wisheart, Don Hammer and Don Wallis, were the original members of the Octagon House Foundation. - Dennis is the only one still living. It is worth a visit.

Enough. I have told you everything that I know and some things I don't. Talk to me at jskvarenina@hotmail.com or the Daily Reporter.

2021-06-25

By Joe Skvarenina

I had the opportunity some time ago to participate in the dedication of the new National Road interpretive panel on the Court House Square placed by the Indiana National Road Association. *If you have the opportunity go take a look.* The National Road or Route 40 as we know it today made major contributions to Indiana, Hancock County and Greenfield. Today we know it as US Route 40 or n Greenfield Main Street. At one time the National Road was the Main Street of the Nation. It began in Cumberland Maryland and was supposed to end in St. Louis Missouri. But it never went further than Vandalia Illinois. It was the first Federal Highway. Thomas Jefferson was the first President to articulate the idea. Jefferson deemed it wise to create a national pathway to America's vast western interior.

Congress debated its benefits. Was it appropriate for National government to become involved in internal improvements? In 1820 Congress finally allocated \$10,000 for laying out the first stretch of the road. It was surveyed in 1827. In 1829 the first appropriation for the opening of the road in Indiana was made by Congress. It was for \$51,600. The 1827 survey map of this area shows an old state road running nearly parallel to National Road to Richmond. In Hancock County we know this as the "Old Centerville Road" which would have traced the path of South Street in Greenfield today.

It was constructed through Indiana in 1834-1835. Superintendents Homer Johnson and John Milroy were paid \$800 per annum to do the job. In June they advertised for proposals to cut timber for a road 28 ft. wide and to remove the stumps in the center and do the grading. There were many requirements. No stumps were to be over 15 inches high. Those in the center of the road were to be rounded and trimmed so as not to cause serious damage. The actual cost of construction was \$121 per mile.

In the early days there were substantial economic benefits to this great highway. Hotels, Inns, and Taverns sprung up and were in Charlottesville, Cleveland and along other places on the pike. The Dayton and Indianapolis Stage brought mail and passengers along the road. It also brought along news of the recent political happenings. I took 2 1/2 days to travel from Dayton to Indianapolis

Animals, flocks of turkeys, were driven east by east to market. White settlers went west to meet our nation's manifest destiny. The 1830's and the 1840's were the hay day of the National Road and many recorded what they saw

Thomas B. Seawright tells..."As many as 24 horse carriages have been counted in a line at one time on the road...

laden with merchandise and drawn by six conestoga wagons were visible all day long at every point and many times until late in the evening besides innumerable caravans of horses, mules and hogs..."

Benjamin Parker tells,... "a flood of emigrants poured along the great highway from June to

November. These companies of wagons were those of the "movers" as we termed the families that were traveling to open farms. Many families occupied 2 or more road wagons with their household goods, and their implements. with extra horses, colts, cattle, sheep, and sometimes hogs were led or driven behind...while even the resolute family, the members of which carried their worldly possessions upon their back or pushed them forward in hand wagon was not an unfamiliar spectacle...But the greatest wonder and delight of all was the stagecoach, radiant in new paint and drawn by four matched horses in their showy harness and filled inside and on top with well-dressed people. I think that there has never been a more graceful or handsome turnout than one of those fine stagecoaches drawn by a splendid team of matched horses, and driven by such drivers as used to handle the ribbons between Richmond and Indianapolis..."

But what left to see in Greenfield today from the National Road era? On the courthouse square at the site of the Chapman later Gooding tavern is now Greenfield's City Hall. Former President Martin Van Buren, former Vice President R.M. Johnson, Henry Clay, abolitionist John Brown and Congressman George Washington Julian were guests at the establishment. George Knox an African American barber had his shop at the site. He later went on to establish the Indiana Recorder one of the first African American Newspapers in the state

At one time, circa 1834, travelers on the National Road washed their horses in a pond, five feet at its deepest on the northwest corner of the public square.

The second courthouse on the square was used from 1834 until 1851. Later the bricks from the second courthouse were used to build the old Christian church at the rear portion of the former DH Goble Printing on American Legion Place. This is now a parking lot. Another unique structure was the Thomas Walpole house which was located on the National Road. It was at the rear of Miller's jewelry and burned in 1992.

The charm of the old National Road also appealed to James Whitcomb Riley and the Riley Old home is of the National Road Era. In his narrative verse the Child's World scenes are laid out facing the highway. I am sure that some of his verse was inspired by the characters he met long the road during his childhood. James Whitcomb Riley called Route 40 a road that blossoms with romance.

Enough I have told you everything that I know and some things I don't. Talk to me at jskvarenina@hotmail.com or the Daily Reporter.

Note: Page 47 brown book bottom use pix original Greenfield Christian church.

2021-06-18

By Joe Skvarenina

Did you know up until 1962 this county went to the Democrats? in fact, the local Democrats in November 1962 won every major county office. Led by Sheriff, Edwin Kirkpatrick democrats elected included George J. Lewis prosecutor, Max Jones clerk, Doyle Thomas auditor, Barbara Gilson recorder, Robert Rodocker assessor and Cletus Barnhart, Fred Bullman commissioners. But it was until November 5, 1963, that things changed when Republican Berry Hurley defeated incumbent Greenfield Mayor Clifford O. Fields by a 37-vote margin. Hurley received 1618 votes to 1581 for Fields. Lone Democrat to be elected in the Republican sweep was Walter P. Worland. He was elected to his third term as s councilman. Does anyone have any Frank Gosset stories? He was known as an early republican organizer.

Here are several political firsts. The first woman elected to office in Hancock County was Hancock County Recorder Hazel Thompson in 1926. She was a Democrat. The first woman Clerk of Court elected in 1966 was Republican Pat Elmore. In addition, Republican Elmore was the first woman to be elected as Mayor of Greenfield. First woman elected Auditor was Republican Irene Kramer. Republican Ruth Harper, Assessor served the longest from 1966 to 1990.

In 1999 Tom Williams, Larry Fox and I wrote a history of the Riley Old Home and the Riley Old Home Society, and an update is being planned. If you have any stories or antidotes to add please let me know. The Riley Old Home Society began its existence with the passage of a resolution by the City of Greenfield on December 19, 1934, with the purpose of retaining and preserving the James Whitcomb Riley Home for prosperity. Mayor Arthur Downing appointed the first President of the Riley Old Home Society who was Z.N. Smith, Superintendent of Schools. The purchase price with unpaid taxes was \$4,000.

Enough. I have told you everything that I know and some things I don't. Talk to me at sjkvarenina@hotmail.com or the Daily Reporter.

2021-06-11

By Joe Skvarenina

Does anyone remember Lacy's Cigar store? For years it was attached to the old Columbia Hotel on 40. The site is now the Christian Church parking lot. I remember it. I used to buy my pipe tobacco there. along with magazines etc. One feature in Lacey's was the liar bench on which you could enjoy the conversations. The liar bench is all that is left of Lacey's, and I do believe that it is in Lyn Oneal's Law Office. I have a reader who's is looking for photos of Lacey's in the 1940's. If have them, please let me know.

Bonnie George Lyons writes "...as children in the 1940' and 1950's my sister and I lived on Spring Street with our George grandparents.... Harberlie's market was about a block east and a block south of our home. Each day my sis or I would walk or ride our bikes to the store to get the meat for that evening's meal. Candy bars were 5 cents and bacon 19 cents a pound. Just east of the market was a shoe repair shop that also sold secondhand comic books. I also remember Shorty Bodkin's Cigar Store of State and Pennsylvania. He had a case with penny candy, and we could drop in on our way to or from school. Do you remember Santa Claus flying in(minus reindeer) to the airport on East 40?

Looks like the stores are coming back to Greenfield. Men are again able to buy clothes in town. In 1895 you could go to the SPOT cash store and buy your shoes. Men's fine dress shoes for \$2.00 were sold for \$1.50 on sale. Special trimmed women's hats with pretty flowers sold for 96 cents which were discounted from \$1.25. Baby's shoes were 16 cents. In the old Masonic Building, the first two floors were also a store called J. Ward Walker and Company. If you go there now you can see the patterns of the display cases on the floor. They sold hats for 50 cents, Swiss embroidered handkerchiefs for 20,25,35 cents down from 50 cents. Later Goodman's Department Store and P.N. Hirsch were at the location. The according to Walkers ad" Our one great aim is to get goods to our customers cheaper that anyone". Other businesses in town in 1895 included C.W. Morrison & Son Undertakers, 27 Main Street, now a parking lot; J.M. Hinchman's Grocery Store, W.A. Wilkins Dug Store, 21 Main Street; Cuyler Photography, James H. Braggs, Restaurant & Bar; Frank Hammel's China Store; William Tollen's new meet market; The Holland Restaurant and Bar, Crescent Pharmacy; and Early's Double Drug Store.

Everything is up north now. But at one time the Kroger's store was on West Main Street in Greenfield. I don't know the location, do you? In 1935 the Kroger's moved to SE corner of American Legion Place and Main Street. It was in the old florist shop now the auctioneer center. At the time of the move the most expensive cut of meat in the meat case was 35 cents. A later date the Regal Market was location across East Street from the Christian Church.

Enough. I have told you everything that I know and some things I don't. Talk to me at jskvarenina@hotmail.com or the Daily Reporter.

2021-06-04

By Joe Skvarenina

Pamela Hughes Sirmans formerly of Rush County now in Dyer County Tennessee is looking for information on the William Forrester Thomas. According to Sirmons in 1830 William F. Thomas resided in Brandywine Township. In 1831 the Thomas family were original members of a church one- and one-half miles north of Carrolton, the members met in the house of William Thomas Sr. father of former Sheriff Thomas. Mr. William Forrester Thomas was probably a horse breeder. In died in Hancock County in November 14, 1841. In going through the various directories and indexes, I find no William Forrester Thomas. I do find two William Thomases buried in Little Sugar Creek or Low Cemetery which is located on the south side and facing 400 south between 50 and 100 West. But the dates don't coincide with yours by a few years. Paul McNeil, resident expert at the Hancock Public Library suggests, you might not have checked yet would be the library's name index.

"This resource has indexed all our early county histories and makes looking up individuals quick and easy. I do see entries for William and the children you listed. It is possible that in a more extensive biography, the parents/grandparents in Kentucky might be mentioned.

This link will take you to the Hancock County Index of Names & Firms. Instructions on using this are at the beginning. The Thomas surname starts on page 359.

<https://drive.google.com/file/d/1DSFFNc2tRO8HhNiPVaVBt8cRoY1QlCpk/view?usp=sharing>

You can find most of the books referenced on our website. If there is something from the Bowen Biographies (1902), please let me know and I can look it up for you as it is not yet digitized. <https://hcplibrary.org/reference/genealogy.htm>." Good advice to all of us doing this type of family research. Good luck Pam!!!

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2021-05-28

Murder on Main Street

By Joe Skvarenina

It was April 1939 and local attorney Charles R Tindell was gunned down in front of his office on Main Street in Greenfield. Mr. Tindell was shot at the doorway to his upstairs office adjacent to Strickland Grocery and the Columbia Barber Shop now the Greenfield Banking Company. He was dispatched by local Bert Albert Swain with a single barrel 16 gauge shot gun. Tindell later died from his wounds at Methodist Hospital. Attorney Tindell had represented Swain's estranged wife Eunice in a circuit court divorce suit. Eunice was awarded \$5 a month child support, \$1000 alimony, \$75 for legal fees, and a quit claim deed for the farm in Brandywine Township, and the marital property on Spring and Lincoln Streets. Swain was determined to right this perceived wrong, and he took the matter into his own hands later shooting himself in the stomach at the site after murdering Tindell. Swain died of his wounds too at Methodist Hospital. Swain's funeral was held at the Hancock County War memorial or as we now know it, the Memorial Building. He was on the Board of the site. Tindell had served two terms as Prosecuting Attorney and was Carrie Simmons' chief counsel in her murder trial for killing her two daughters which ended in a hung jury. I am sure that was an April that was long remembered in the annals of Hancock County!

Editorial Submitted 2021-03-26

By Joe Skvarenina

John Krull recent editorial in the Daily Reporter defending Dan Quayle was spot on. I too knew Mr. Quayle serving on his finance committee when he ran for Senate many years ago. He is no dummy. But back in those days, as Bush's Vice President, he had a target on his back for Murphy Brown others. It really was unfortunate that the man had to be treated in such a fashion. Thank heavens for spell check.

Indiana has a proud tradition of providing Vice Presidential candidates for the national ticket. In addition to Quayle and Pence was a player in the current election. Indiana also has also been present in many past elections. Indiana might be called the home of Vice Presidents. For example, Schuyler Colfax was a South Bend resident and editor of the "St Joseph Valley Register". He was Speaker of the House of Representatives from 1863-69. He was Vice President under Ulysses S. Grant. William English was Democrat nominee for Vice President in 1880. Prior he served four terms in Congress 1853-1861. Thomas Hendricks from Shelbyville served as 16th Governor of Indiana. In 1876 he was the running mate of Samuel J Tilden who lost to President Rutherford B. Hayes. This election was thrown in the House and because of a deal troops were withdrawn from the south. Charles Wilson Fairbanks was Theodore Roosevelt's Vice-Presidential running mate in 1904. During that year at a lawn party, he served Manhattan cocktails at his house on North Meridian with Theodore Roosevelt in attendance. This was during a period of intense temperance in the Republican party. As a result, he was removed from the 1908 General Methodist Conference and he was known as Cocktail Charlie Fairbanks. He was Roosevelt's Vice President from 1905- 1909. In 1923 his house was purchased by Indianapolis Insurance Company and still stands near the Children's Museum. John Kern was the running mate of William Jennings Bryan who campaigned in Hancock County several times. Kern was a twice unsuccessful democrat candidate for Governor. Thomas R, Marshall was Vice President under Woodrow Wilson for 1913-21. Marshall had a dry sense of humor. He was known for saying after a Senate debate for What this country needs is a good 5-cent cigar". We are more than corn fields. Enough!

2021-05-21

By Joe Skvarenina

Jim Arthur writes, "Thanks for your article on the Gilboa church and cemetery." Jim says that my Crider ancestors are buried there. In 1873 my great-great-great grandfather's body, William Alexander Crider, was stolen from there. His wife discovered the grave disturbed when attending another funeral, requested that the dirt be removed and upon further examination, the coffin lid had been cut with a saw with the body of the old man taken away. The grave vestments were left, and the old man must have been removed naked. In those days, the resurrectionists would steal bodies in be used as cadavers in Medical School.

The Crider's were a prominent pioneer family who held their annual reunion at White's Grove one half mile south of THI&E Stop at Liberty Trees's Shop in Stringtown. In 1912 it would have been the 13th Reunion.

The late and great Sue Baker in her book tells us there are two cemeteries in Brandywine Township that cannot be found but they are marked on the Hancock County Commissioners Map. One is in section nineteen and the other in twenty-seven. Reference to both burial grounds on June 27, 1965 tells us that "the stones are gone" in both sections.

Richard Ratcliff, Henry County Historian, recently wrote a book about the Civil War burials in the Center Grove, Spiceland Friends, and Dunreith Cemeteries. in Henry County. There are forty-nine Yankees and two Rebels buried at three sites, I am going to give the book to the Hancock County Library for those genealogists out there. Some interesting burials: Soney Modlin was a member of 28th Indiana Regiment, the only Hoosier African American Regiment of the Civil War, John Eastridge who died in 1928 was the last civil war veteran to die and be buried in Spiceland Cemetery Township. The last surviving Civil War Veteran in Henry County was Joseph Smith. He died in 1941. General William Grose died in New Castle on July 30, 1900. His home is the Henry County Historical Society Museum. His funeral was the largest ever held in New Castle. Harmon Rayl died in 1863 and his remains were brought back to Spiceland and buried in the Spiceland Friend Cemetery and a heavy snow fall hampered the burial. So, it was necessary to partially tunnel through the snow to reach the grave.

Enough. I have told you everything that I know and some things don't. Talk to me at jskvarenina@hotmail.com or through the Daily Reporter.

2021-05-14

By Joe Skvarenina

Mark Sullivan shares with us the May 19, 1906 Evening Star headline, "Lid on at Greenfield. Will keep it on if it Necessitates of a New Marshall Every Day." The Evening Star goes on to tell, "The lid was on good and tight in Greenfield Sunday. The saloons were closed both in front and in the rear, and the saloon keepers and bartenders enjoyed a vacation. On Saturday Mayor Carr appointed two extra policemen for Sunday in order that a close watch might be kept in "Whiskey Alley," on which the back doors of a majority of the saloons in the city open." Do you know the location of Whiskey Alley? It is alley that runs south of the current City Hall and it must have been a happening place. Have you ever been to the Riley Emporium? It is a wonderful place to visit the past. Do you know at one time it was the old Grand Hotel? The building is circa 1890's and I believe the style of Italianate. It was probably built during the gas boom period of free gas in Greenfield. The only news article I find about the site was that in 1917 Miss May Roberts was robbed of \$40.00 while she slept. The back of the building on Whiskey alley was probably Walter McCole's Tailor Shop. I also know that there was also a restaurant at the hotel. There is a painted landscape at that location right in the wall in the eatery section. What do you know about the Grand Hotel? Do you have any old photos?

Greg Murphy shares with us an article from the April 28, 1937 Knightstown Banner. It seems that the brother of one James Kemmer, a black man, was accused of making welcomed advances on a farmers' wife in rural Charlottesville. Kemmer had come up to the farmhouse door and asked for a drink of water. The farm wife was resting on the floor when he arrived. Word got around and a local posse of farmers apprehended Mr. Kammer and hung him at the old Fairgrounds which would have been across the road from Hawks Pointe Golf Club. Later the famers' wife told she didn't think he meant any harm. There was never a trial, and no one was prosecuted. The event happened in 1875. There was one lynching in Hancock county and it was one too many.

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2021-05-07

By Joe Skvarenina

The Pentecostal Church of the Nazarene was organized in 1915 in Stringtown. A sum of \$500 was subscribed to the new church on the evening of its organization. Grover Van Duyn and wife donated a plot for the church at the northwest corner made by the crossing of the National Road across the road of Liberty Trees old shop. The house of worship was completed in 1916. The first church of this order was created in 1895. It teaches Wesleyan doctrine of Christian perfection, but has a congregational form of worship.

In 1838 Rev. Joseph Williams and others conducted a camp meeting and organized a class in the neighborhood of Wesley Williams. A year or two later a log church was built and it along with School House # 9 was used for worship. In 1867 a new meeting house was built next to School House # 9 at the cost of \$1,000 and was known as Brown's Chapel. The church was dedicated October, 1868 by Rev. George Brown of Cincinnati Bible College and was named in his honor. It was now called Brown's Chapel Methodist Protestant Church. In the 1880's the church was sold to The Apostolic Holiness Union and Prayer Union. In 1898 it was repaired and remodeled. This building stood until June 25, 1902 when it was destroyed by a cyclone. In 1904 new church was erected to replace this structure under the faith challenge of Thomas Williams. In the early 1940's a classroom was added to the building. In 1967 the entire building was remodeled. In 1968 the church was renamed Brown's Chapel Wesleyan. A major expansion and remodeling project was dedicated in 1997. It is reported that the original beams are still part of the structure. There has been 50 Pastors serving Brown's Chapel

Enough. I have told you everything that I know and some things I don't. Talk to me at jskvarenina@hormail.com or the Daily Reporter.

2021-04-30

By Joe Skvarenina

Where is the German community located in Hancock County? According to the Zion Lutheran Church history, the original German community was located generally highway 40 to the north and Highway 52 to the south, 500 West on the east and 800 West on the west. The German Lutherans who came into the area emphasized education so that their children could be literate learn the Lutheran religion along with the German traditions and language. Public school was not built in New Palestine until 1884. At first the church Pastor served also as a teacher. In the 1860's a Mr. Lahusen was employed as a teacher. In those days it was custom for the teacher to "Board Around" living with the members a week at a time. One day he asked Pastor Kunz if he would be able to substitute for him. The Pastor willingly agreed. A few days later Mr. Lahusen disappeared as did the money he borrowed from the congregation members. Pastor Kunz took over the teaching responsibilities at this point or until 1879. If you travel down the Brookville Road you can see the old school house which was pulled across the field and stopped at the railroad tracks and turned into a residence.

In 1880 the Richman history of Hancock County tells, "To the German Lutherans, the house that had been dedicated to the worship of God is a sacred place. For this reason, they will permit no meetings to be held in the church except regular services and business meetings for the administration of the affairs of the church." A little story in the Hancock Democrat tells, "At the German Lutheran Church under the superintendence of Rev. J.C. Kunz, the Christmas tree and the appropriate declamations and the Christmas songs and the extra large amount of presents on the occasion, was surely the greatest affair ever exhibited in Hancock County. This congregation is the most numerous in membership and wealth, and the members are very liberal in their donations for church and school purposes and have celebrated Christmas in the greatest manner imaginable, which would have credited to a metropolitan city as it is much credit to the church and its worthy minister and will bear imitation..." Zion is has restored their old cemetery were the first Pastor is buried, Pastor Kunz, at first also served St. Paul in Indianapolis simultaneously.

Enough. I have told you everything I know and some things I don't. Talk to me.

2021-04-23

By Joe Skvarenina

I was going down the old Brookville Treaty Road commonly (called State Rte 52) the other day past the home of Marcia Parker. Marcia and family live in the Schildmeier home which at one time had toll gate in the front of it. In 1852 the State allowed turnpike companies to improve roads usually with gravel. As a result of these improvement users would have to pay a toll to travel the road.

Close to Marcia's House is the Schildmeier cemetery. It seems that Zion German Lutheran and Reformed Congregations worshiper across 700 West from the Cemetery in a log church until about 1851. In 1845. Christian and his wife Maria Schildmeier conveyed to the " church of Zion in consideration of two dollars and fifty cents one fourth acre upon the express conditions: that said land be used for a burying ground and there be a dwelling built on said land, and further that the members of the church of Zion shall fence said ground with a good fence and keep said fence in good repair and should the meeting house adjoining the above described be discontinued the said Christian Schildmeier and his heirs or assigns have the burying ground back for the sum of two dollars and fifty cents."

It is also interesting to note that Anton Schildmeier in 1888 served on the building committee for the German Evangelical Church in New Palestine. Anton Schildmeier was the name on Marcia Parker's old barn. I do believe that this current church building now stands in New Palestine as the United Church. In 1840 Anton Schildmeier and his wife Sophia built a large barn. In 1974 it was remodeled and used as a home by Max and Mildred Hendryx, Marcia's parents.

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2021-04-16

By Joseph Skvarenina

Around 1935 Emma Schramm Vonnegut translated into English the letters of her grandfather, Jacob Schramm and his family, from Indiana to Germany in the year 1836 for her children and grandchildren. In 1954 the Indiana Historical Society received a gift of the Schramm papers which included 78 volumes of diaries, two account books, miscellaneous manuscripts and some printed items. The diaries were kept by Wilhelm August Schramm son of Jacob Schramm and extended from 1851-1908. These works were a great source for information on early Hancock County farm life. Items like the conversion of swamps into farm land by draining and tilling, building roads, preparing the virgin soil for ploughing and harvesting, also farm tools and equipment from homemade items to sophisticated machinery. These books also gave information field crops, orchards, as well as livestock raised. The writings provide a glimpse of family and social life in rural Indiana. For example, "My memory to a log cabin set down among the large trees...The cabin had a large fireplace where the baking and cooking was done...There my grandmother told stories of their earlier years in the wilderness, for instance, how she used to tie a string from tree to tree when she went out in the woods so that she could find her way back to the house...In the later years a little white church (Lutheran) was built and to it my grandmother went regularly as long as she lived..."

The Schramm papers have been reprinted by the Indiana Historical Society and the last I knew the Hancock County Historical Society had a few copies of this booklet.

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2021-04-09

By Joe Skvarenina

One reader writes" I am not sure not sure I saw you mentioning the local marker in New Palestine, unless by some other name. Last time I went through there I did not see the sign, although the post appears to be there. Pictures attached from Google Street view. SW corner of Bittner and US 52 - brick building on corner, map showing house number 110; immediately east of that is a building where a lady had a restaurant - maybe "Bonnie" but I remember talk of her making delicious pies. East edge of that structure shows house number 115 on porch, and then there is a pathway to the rear. That is where the marker is (or was!) for Sugar Creek Twp." Yes, that local marker is still on site. The location was Jonathan Evans General Store and Post office. It was platted in 1838. Oh yes, the Restaurant was Bonnie's, and she had the best pie in the world.

The Black Swamp marker is in front of the old 84 Lumber near Philadelphia, on 40. If you were going west on the National Road and met another wagon you had the right of way. The east bound traffic would have to get off the single road and let you pass. In that Black swamp area, your east bound heavy wagon would at times get stuck in the mud. You would stand a good chance of being robbed at that point.

Yes, there is also a marker at Tailhot, have you ever been there? A post office called Kinder was established on April 28, 1847. The name was changed to Carrolton on January 26, 1869. On September 5, 1905, the post office was taken away. In March 1915 it was reestablished under the name of Finley in honor of Congressman Finley Gray. The railroad adopted the name of Reedville for the station. Common folk called Tailhot which Riley immortalized. Michael Kester would welcome your hep on restoring the local markers. He is President of the Hancock County Historical Society.

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2021-04-02

By Joe Skvarenina

One reader writes, "I Read your article in today's Greenfield paper, and am pleased to see that plans are in the works to get the county history better 'marked'. As you and I know, the marker for Tyner Store just west of the Shiloh Church on 500 S is gone, the remainder just hanging by a chad.

And you indicated that the remnants of his store remain on Morristown Pike. I don't know if the current property owners want visitors poking around their property, but I've figured out it was on 500 E as Morristown Pike doesn't go further south, at least not by that name. It appears to be on the south edge of the property of the first house south of 550 S. See pictures below.

Carl & Flossie Purcell, a delightful couple, used to live there, both now deceased. We knew them well and I'm surprised Carl never mentioned the store remnants...surely, he knew." Yes, Tyner's Store is still there

Elijah Tyner built a store in Blue River Township in 1833. It became the best-known store in the early history of the county. In addition to Hancock, people would come from Rush and Shelby Counties to do their trading at the site. I believe that the location was on Morristown Pike and the buildings are still there. Tyner operated his store until 1872. Mr. Tyner migrated from South Carolina to Hancock County in 1820 and settled in our area before the county was organized in 1828. He had also lived in Kentucky and Franklin and Decatur Counties Indiana. In 1821 he entered eighty acres in Blue River Township, He was the third white man to make a land entry in the county. In 1822 Tyner married Mary Nelson who died in 1830. In 1832 he married Ann Hollerston, his third wife. Mr. Tyner was of pioneer stock and he arrived in the county within two years of the first settler. People say as a merchant he was honest and accommodating. In addition to being a merchant he was a farmer and stock trader. In 1822 he planted an orchard and was very interested in horticulture. He helped many of his pioneer neighbors to get their produce to market. He was a Baptist, Whig, and Republican in the that order. He had a large family and three wives. He is buried in the Shiloh Church Cemetery. The first land entry in the county was made by Harmon Warrum. If you want to help with the markers contact Michael Kester the Historical Society President.

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2021-03-26

By Joe Skvarenina

Linda Dunn writes, "Did you know that Greenfield once had a black city detective? William Neal. I had been trying to trace down the full story but all I've been able to find thus far are bits of pieces of an odd situation. The mayor appointed a few "city detectives" and one of these was William Neal (black) whose job was to assist the police in entrapping some bootleggers. City Attorney, Tindall had warned the mayor that his appointments were contrary to state law and the court later confirmed this and thus it's doubtful that any of the city detectives appointed were actually paid. This was in 1910...John Seward, Lew Tillison and George Herron are in jail on the charge of bootlegging. Their trials are to come off today before the Mayor. It is stated that the city police force and one William Neal, colored, worked up the cases. Neal was to go to the men and get them to let him have whiskey while the officers would be in sight but not known to the man that furnished the alcohol. One man not under arrest, but whom it is understood is expecting it daily, says that Neal went to him with a pitiful face saying that his wife was sick and that he wanted him to get him a quart of whiskey. He at first refused to do so but Neal urged him, saying he wanted it for medical purposes for his wife and for nothing else. On this statement he took his money and went and bought the whiskey for him. If this be the manner which the officers are using to get indictment, we do not think it much to their credit. Whiskey is no doubt being sold here contrary to law and it is the duty of the officials to put a stop to it, but do it in a straightforward way, or come out and say that you are unable to put a stop to the unlawful traffic..."

Yes, there were African Americans who lived in Hancock County. " In researching the history of Hancock County's black residents, Linda found 45 black residents in 1840 and 104 in 1850. In 1860, that number dropped to 23 and did not reach triple digits again until 1880. The number of black residents remained constant afterwards until 1920, when it dropped to 30 residents." George was the most famous black businessman in Hancock County. He was a friend of the poet, a barber and a Newspaper man. He came to Hancock County after the Civil War. Dunn's book is available on Amazon.

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2021-03-19

By Joe Skvarenina

Dan Leary writes, "You probably don't remember me but a few years ago I mentioned that I had some documents from the Knights of Pythias dating back to the second and first decade of the 1900's. My father Hugh and uncle Robert owned and operate Leary's Bottled Gas at 209 W. Main Street from 1949-1970. The building is now Ford Flooring." Dan goes on to tell that his dad and uncle purchased the K. Of P. building to the east of their business in the 1960's. It is now a parking lot. The building was two story and as kids we would go up and snoop around. Dan indicates it was left as is from when the Knights of Pythias had their last meeting at the site. Coats of Armour, uniform, furniture, dishes etc. were all left behind. There was a solid oak desk which had documents in the drawers from the lodge. Trustee members in 1908 on those documents included Charles Bennett, Adolph Fullgraff, George Suess, John Martin, Z.T. Morford, Charles Bock, John Jackson, Isaac Wilson, Henry Fry, Alonzo Ray, William Hughes, and John Wray. Other documents include a 1932 funeral bill for a member from Pasco's for \$102.44, casket and vault, 1939 bill for Ice cream from the Greenfield Ice Cream Company and a bill from the Keyhole Grocery, 1102 East Main Street.

Eureka Lodge, No. 22. Knights of Pythias, was organized on the 29th of February 1872 on the second floor of the building known as the Walker Corner which was replaced by the second Masonic Building. The Knights also met in the Leary's building on the corner Pennsylvania and Main Street, a room over the Capital State Bank and some other places. In 1908 the Lodge purchased three-eighths interest in a building known as the Strickland Building. In 1911 they purchased the entire building. At that time, they had 324 members. Uniform rank of the Knights of Pythias was organized December 14, 1903 with Judge Hinchman as first captain. The Lodge flourished a few years and declined. In 1914 it was reorganized. At that time, it had 32 members. There were also Knights of Pythias Lodges in New Palestine, Wilkinson, and Maxwell. I am sure the Lodge was like a Masonic Order. There were also women groups.

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2021-03-12

By Joe Skvarenina

Dr. Gary Wright does a masterful job illustrating the forces that confront church revival and Christian renewal in his new book, "He Just showed up." From the days of Jonathan Edwards, Charles Finney, 'Hoosier Evangelist' John T. Hatfield and Cadel's Tabernacle to his own ministry World Renewal International, on the Hatfield' farm, he weaves a masterful whole cloth account of renewal and revival. A cogent history of the Hancock County Wright family's and his own history in ministry, this is a "must" read for those who are interested in church history, Indiana religious history, and the practice of renewal. It is also, a must read 'primer' church leaders and teachers of religion. There has been many fine church people in Hancock County. One such person was John T. Hatfield. Have you seen the Hatfield Campground in Cleveland? Hatfield was a Hancock County Methodist who became involved in the Holiness movement around the turn of the 20th century. A camp meeting in 1907 turned into a revival which resulted in the founding of the Eastern Indiana Holiness Association.

Shopkeeper Hatfield turn preacher, as a result because of the revival and he spoke all over Indiana and the nation. One camp meeting held at Cleveland last from August 25, 1927 until September 25, 1927. This event was billed as "A ten-day feast of the tabernacles."

Reverend Hatfield preached that the business of the nation was "living right with God." He is buried in the Hollywood cemetery in California. He wrote two books one entitled, "Forty years a live wire." Another Hancock Preacher was Reverend Charles Leo O'Donnell, 11th President of Notre Dame. One of the most brilliant minds of the day he was born in the Greenfield area November 15, 1884. His family only lived in this area for his first two years. He wrote several books including "Newman's Gentlemen" 1916, "A Book of Notre Dame Verse" which he edited in 1917, "The Cloister and other Poems" 1922 and "A Rime of the Rood", 1928. He died in 1934.

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2021-03-05

By Joe Skvarenina

Pleasant View Friends Church was in northeast Blue River Township Section 9, Township 15, Range 8. adjoining Samuel Hill's farm. At first the church met in a schoolhouse next door to the property. I would guess Pleasant View School District 11. The church was established under the authority of the Spiceland Friends quarterly meeting in November 1850. Early members included William Hill and family, Libni Hill and family, Samuel Brown, Phineas White, Matthew Dodson, Danile Hastings, Alfred & John Hunt, Eli and Robert Brown, Danile and John Reim, Albert white, Enoch Pierson and Amos, Samuel, John Hill. The church had an active Ladies Aid Society. A Bible School was conducted and was well attended. Samuel B. Hill served as the teacher for a quarter of a century. Mr. Hill also served as Blue River Township Trustee. During the 1880's the average attendance at the church was 30. Service was conducted at the church until the 1890's. The building is no longer there and all that is left is a small cemetery. An agreement was made with Walnut Ridge to maintain the cemetery. The building was moved three-quarter of a mile south and used as a house until the 1960's. Historian Sue Baker tells us that mysteriously, the tombstone inscriptions are duplicated in the Gilboa Cemetery also located in Blue River Township.

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2021-02-26

By Joe Skvarenina

Greg Murphy writes, "I read your 'Back In Time' article recently about the Mohawk Lumber Company and you asked if anyone knew the location. County road 200W (aka Mohawk Rd.), runs through the middle of Mohawk, the east side is in Center Twp. and the west side is in Buck Creek Twp.

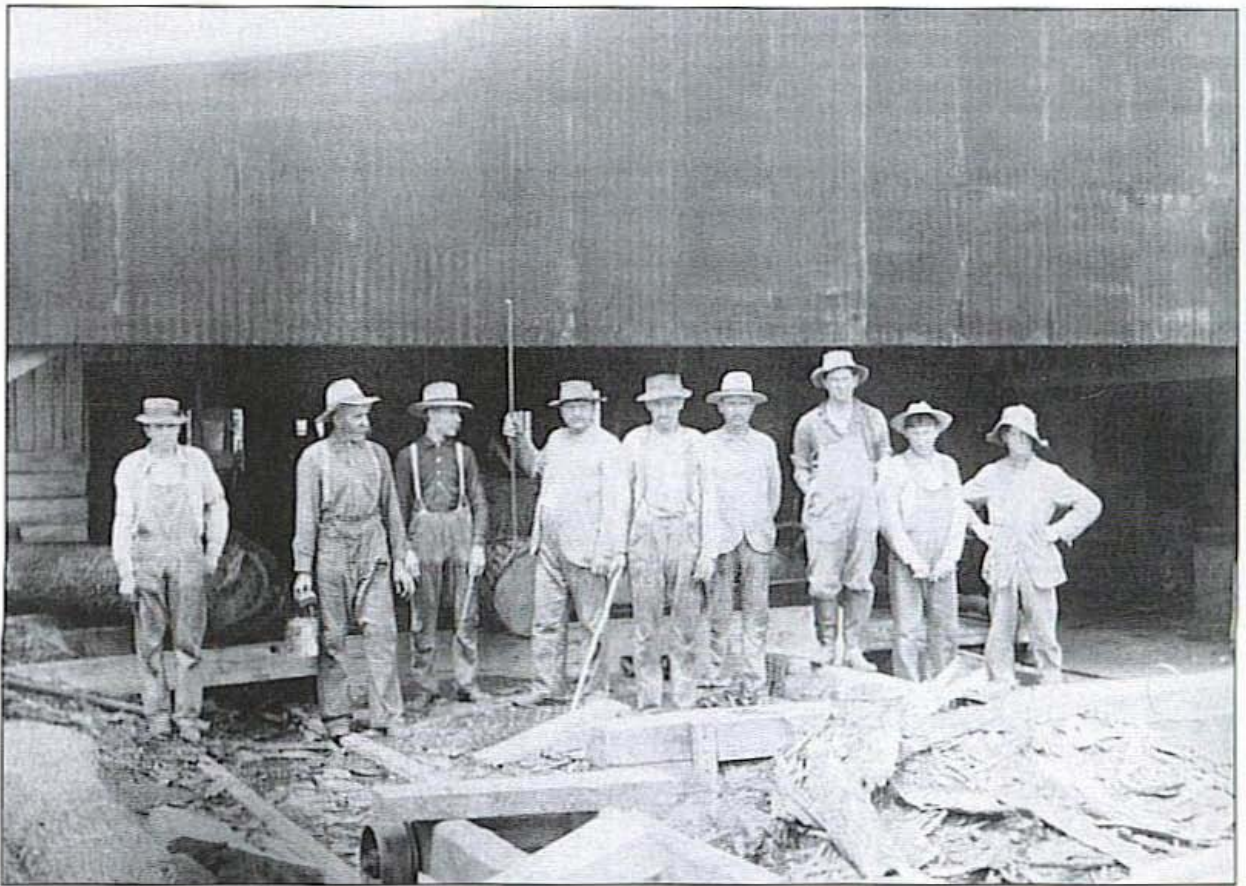
The Mohawk Lumber Company, commonly known as the "Sawmill", was located on the west side in Buck Creek Twp., a short distance down a lane behind the Mohawk Grain Elevator. The railroad was on the north side of both the Sawmill and the Elevator.

When I was kid in the 60's, we used to walk back to the Sawmill, there were a couple of buildings still standing then, as well as stacked lumber. It was interesting but not a place for kids to play..." The photo of the Sawmill includes "... men who worked there in 1909. As stated, Frank Newman is on the far left, his father, Oliver "Arch" Newman is the 4th man from the left. I also know that my grandfather's brother, James H Murphy, is standing to the right beside Arch Newman."

The Mohawk Limber Company was founded by Oliver Arch Newman in 1880. A sawmill was bult first. After a fire in 1909, another mill was constructed and operated by Mr. Neman's son Frank. Truck bodies, Greyhound vans, tractor cabs, furniture and bridge decking were manufactured at the Mohawk Lumber Company. Frank Newman was a World War I veteran and he died August 23, 1978.

Pat Elmore celebrated a significant birthday in May, and you can guess which one? I quit celebrating them a long time ago. She sends me some old clippings and a photo she found in her daughter Becky Rea's House. Do or recognize the names Underbush, Patricia Lyons, James W Parks, Jean Wagner, James Wagner, or Rufus Reed? High Street is mentioned in one which makes me think of Rushville. When you find these items in old buildings it is worth attempting to identify them. Let me know.

Enough. I have told you everything that i know and some things I don't. Talk to me Talk to me at jskvarenina@hotmail.com or the Daily Reporter.



The Mohawk Lumber Company was founded by Oliver Arch Newman in 1880. A sawmill was built first. Then after a fire in 1909, another mill was constructed and was operated by Mr. Newman's son Frank. The above picture is the crew who worked in the mill in 1909. The first one on the left is Frank Newman, and the fourth from the left is Oliver Arch Newman.

2021-02-19

By Joe Skvarenina

Gary Wright inquiries about Gilboa Methodist Church which was down the street from his house. Gary and World Renewal International, a nondominational Christian Mission organization is located on a section of the John T. Hatfield farm. Dr Wright is president of the group and Hatfield was renown evangelist in the United States who left Hancock County because of the Klan.

The Binford History of Hancock County and the Hancock County Democrat tells us the Gilboa Methodist Episcopal church was located at about the middle of the west line of the southwest quarter of section 4, township 15, range 8. It was among the first churches and religious organizations in Blue River township. The society was organized about 1830 and their meetings for worship were held at private residences for about two years. The meetings were conducted principally as prayer bands, with an occasional visit of a preacher in the neighborhood. The Rev. Amos Sparks was the first preacher assigned to Gilboa. The membership increased and in 1832 the society built a log church on the ground donated for that purpose by James Sample and Benjamin Miller, two of its first members. This church stood near the site above described. In the summer of 1852, a frame building was erected, which was used as long as the congregation remained in existence. In the year 1876 the enrollment was twenty-one members. In 1895 there were only six members, some having moved away, and others died. No regular Methodist services have been held at the church since the early nineties. The church building has now been moved, and nothing remains as an evidence of the former site except the burial ground which adjoined the church. The old Gilboa cemetery has buried within it some of the oldest citizens of the county. Several of the stones marking the graves show that the persons whose memory they are to perpetuate were born during the latter part of the eighteenth century. Among the families that belonged to the church were James Sample and family, John Sample and family, Elizabeth Wood, Sarah Sample, Polly Meek, Arthur Lewis and family, Adam Allen and family, Benjamin Miller and family, Johnson McGinnis, James Lemay and family, and James McGinnis and family. Gilboa was a liberal church and revivals were held in the years 1841, 1849, 1860, and 1867. Gilboa allowed other church groups to use their building including the Campbellites, New Lights, Presbyterians, United Brethren, Mormons, Baptist, and Universalists.

Now rumor has it that the Gilboa building was moved to the Ron Kramer property north of the burying ground. In talking to Mr. Kramer, he indicated that he to tear down the building rumored to be the church in 1972 before it fell. It had been used as a barn. The only man executed in Hancock County in buried is Gilboa, Edward Coffin who was executed October 9, 1934.

Enough. I have told you everything that I know and some things I don't. Talk to me at jskvarenina@hotmail.com or the Daily Reporter.

2021-02-12

By Joe Skvarenina

Kert Toler is looking for information about the McCordsville Dog Track. Periodically we have had inquiries about the McCordsville Dog Track. Ronn Berry comes to our rescue, He says. " The track was built in the late 1930's for dog racing but the owners were never able to get a gambling permit because some say of mob connections. It never opened for that reason." Later midget racing became a big deal and it was bought by Armscamp Speedway. One of the owners was named Scampleton and the track was called Raceland. It was asphalt. It cost 85 cents for general admission and 60 cents for the grandstand. The McCordsville Sport Park was eventually built on the location. As late as 1966 you could still see outlines on the track on satellite photos. There was a drive-in theater built on the site after the track closed in 1949. There also was a speedway in Fortville called the Outlaw Speedway off of 36 and 67. It was torn down in 1986. It was a dirt track. There was also a track for midgets next to Riley park. Myron Fohr in a Marche family car raced midget on this track in the 1940's . Mr. Fohr was a big time midget racer from Wisconsin. The Marche family from Milwaukee were big players in auto racing in the 1940's and promoted many racers at the Wisconsin State Fair. me know.

Jake Gumberts also provides us with more information on Race Tracks in Hancock County. According to Gumberts race track exited east of Stanley Chevrolet on State Route 67 in McCordsville.. A Soccer Field was been built on the site. The drive into the entrance of the Soccer Field was the driveway onto the race track. There is an old light pole in this area that has been there for years. Jake adds, " the track was called the dog track and I don't know why? In the late 1940's after WW II my dad use to take me there to watch midgets racing. As I remember it was a short flat asphalt track. Two drivers I recall were Harry McQuinn and Len Duncan. For years it was grown up in weeds and people jumped trash on it. This should not be confused with the dirt bike track that was along 67. This was built in the later 1970's and close to the old Plantation Club."

Kert now owns the Sports Park and is looking for photos. If you can help let me know. He is particularly interested in the Grand Stand.

Enough I have told you everything that I know and some things I don't. Talk to me at jskvarenina@hotmail.com or the Daily Reporter.

2021-02-05

By Joe Skvarenina

Linda Dunn has written a new book entitled "100 Yera of Black History in Hancock County" It is available of Amazon. Yes, there were African Americans who lived in Hancock County. In researching the history of Hancock County's black residents, Linda found "45 black residents in 1840 and 104 in 1850. In 1860, that number dropped to 23 and did not reach triple digits again until 1880. The number of black residents remained constant afterwards until 1920, when it dropped to 30 residents.

Of those 1840 residents, John Delany was the center of Hancock County's only "black settlement", which was established in New Palestine. However, the "two white men who married mulatto women" were mixed blood neighbors and relatives from Delany's early home in Franklin County. After Delany's death, most of the younger generation relocated to Illinois with some shifts in racial identity..." Yes, they claimed to be white. "The Chivis family of Vernon Township in 1840 was a better example of racial fluidity, the family consisted of Daniel (black), and Nancy (white) with 12 children who were "mulatto". The adult children who remained in McCordsville became "white" on official records after their father's death. Those who moved to other states became black on official documents. Hancock County black residents also had close relationships with other black settlements with similar racial fluidity experiences. George L. Knox, undoubtedly the best-known black resident of Hancock County, married Aurilla Harvey, whose family settled near Howard County's Basset and Rush settlements.

Calvin Gilliam, who taught the "colored school" in Greenfield for about two years, grew up in the small Boone County black settlement and had family ties to the Roberts Settlement in Hamilton County. He later married a Beech Settlement descendant from Henry county. Greenfield was the only public school in the county that was segregated in the early years, but all students were eventually in the same building with the "colored school" held in one classroom. Marcellus Neal, son of a former slave, graduated from Greenfield's colored school and became the first male African American student to attend Indiana University.

Many of Hancock County's black citizens achieved middle class lifestyles by working within the common racial barriers. Wilson Day owned a plumbing and tin shop; Hattie Merida converted her home into the Merry Day Inn; and there were multiple black barber shops and hairdressers. Horace Franklin and others started a Metallic Railroad Tie Company in Shirley. Jeshu Neal worked for Eli Lilly and local glass factories employed a few black employees. Newspaper reports indicate that a fair number of blacks owned their own homes and had good relationships with their white neighbors..."

Enough. I have told you everything that I know and some things I don't. Contact me at jskvarenina@hotmail.com or the Daily Reporter.

2021-01-29

By Joe Skvarenina

Michael Kester President of the Hancock County Historical Society tells," In 1974 Tom E. Q. Williams was President of the Hancock County Historical Society and the lead planner to get historical markers placed in each township. The goal was to be ready by the Bicentennial on July 4. The W. H Staples foundry was contracted to fashion each marker with the select historical text and a medallion representing HCHS on the top. There was a dedication ceremony for each marker during its placement in the respective township. The markers represented events, buildings, towns, and people noting a brief description for the viewer to read. Now years have gone by and the weather and time (even cars) have not been kind to the markers. Some have had paint jobs and others have been faded by the sun. Philip Power, Buck Creek Co. Director of the HCHS, has taken ownership of the project to replace or refurbish all the markers. We have some that have been sandblasted and powder coated black. Repainting the lettering has made them look as if were in 1974 again!" Those markers commemorated the Warrington Mill, Cleveland Inn, the Fiqua Cabin, the Grand Fourth of July Picnic, Phoebe's Fort, Tailholt, the Black Swamp, Old Seminary, Little Orphant Annie, Jonathan Evans, and the Tyner Store. I am sure that the Historical Society could use donations to accomplish the tasks at hand. A marker is located on Pennsylvania Street in Greenfield at the location of the old Ranch Market if you want to see one. There is at least one in every township. I am sure that the Hancock County Historical Society could use your assistance. It is to run to travel around and look at them.

Enough. I have told you everything that I know and some things I don't. Talk to me at jskvarenina@hotmail.com or the Daily Reporter.

2021-01-22

By Joe Skvarenina

Everybody likes a good murder mystery. Folks from Shirley traveled to New Castle to watch the trial of Melvin Rigsby, former Shirley Town Marshall, for the murder of Herman Riggs in Shirley but on the Henry County side of things. The year was 1927 and the tragedy happened in the Foust Pool Room. The reason was over the arrest of Harry West and William Sullivan by Town Marshall Melvin Rigsby. Riggs accused the sheriff of being a liar when he arrested West and Sullivan. No one knows the cause of the arrest of West and Sullivan. Later the sheriff claimed that he shot Riggs in self-defense. Riggs was in town to sell a load of corn and according to several witnesses had not been drinking. Earl Williams of Wilkinson assistant at Condo undertaking establishment testified about driving the ambulance to Anderson Hospital.

Details of the inquest and autopsy along with the examination of the body was given by Coroner V.T. Davis. Dr. Ralph Wilson of Shirley, for more than thirty years a practicing physician also testified of being called to the pool room by the defendant. Henry Foust, owner of the poolroom told, "Upon entering the rear door of the restaurant which adjoins the poolroom he heard two shots separated by five seconds." Foust testified that he hesitated a few seconds went in and Riggs was a lying on the floor." He was dead. No one was able to give damaging evidence to the state during the trial so, Marshall Rigsby went free.

Enough. I have told you everything that know and some things I don't. Talk to me at jskvarenina@hotmail.com or the Daily Reporter.

2021-01-015

By Joe Skvarenina

Nancy Hinshaw writes," I was looking for any old pictures of Cumberland, IN. There was an old store building where and Insurance building is now just down from the Hendrix Funeral Home. I used to live in it as a kid. Do you have any information and/or pictures of it?" The Hancock County Historical Society has some and I told you about Rosalie Lewis's book at the Cumberland Town Hall. Also, the Greenfield Library has some photos on file in my collection. I looked at some of them today and they are hard to distinguish. A portion of Cumberland is in Hancock County which would be the newer portion. The plan for the original section of Cumberland was recorded on July 7, 1831. The land surveyed for the site was owned by Samuel Fuller. His wife Ann was the daughter of George Pogue the pioneer settler of Indianapolis. According to the early descriptions " Cumberland is handsomely situated 10 miles east of Indianapolis and 10 miles west of Greenfield on the National Road. It has the advantage of healthy and flourishing neighborhoods and as to the soil and timber, inferior to none perhaps in the western country." The Interurban ran right through the Center of Cumberland and many accidents were caused over the years. The Cumberland Bank with the arched window on the North side of the National Road was forced to close in the Great Depression. The First Cumberland Baptist Church was built in 1840 and a new building was erected in 1883. St. John United Church of Christ was built on South German Church Road in 1866 with brick.

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2021-01-08

By Joe Skvarenina

I shared this piece with you once before. I think Linda is doing such Important research. the Indiana Historical Society tells about white men married to mullato women in Sugar Creek Township. Linda Dunn adds to this hidden history when she tells, ' The one mixed family I found in Vernon Township flipped this script as a white woman was married to a “mulatto” man. Linda goes on to add, "Daniels Chives (the last name is spelled at least four different ways on the documents I found) and the children were listed as “mulatto” but Daniel’s wife, Nancy, was not. They married March 8, 1815 in Clermont, Ohio and are listed in the 1830 census records in that community. The 1840 census shows them in Vernon Township and Daniel is a farmer. The 1850 census shows the same and Daniel died 16 Jun 1856. All the census records either list Nancy as white or simply don’t list her as black. Sometime between his death and the 1870 census, without moving from Vernon Township and with McCordsville listed as their post office, the adult children in that household with Nancy became white. A couple of them revered back to being black after they married black partners and relocated. Passing is not uncommon but blacks usually had to relocate when doing this and Vernon Township was sufficiently small that their neighbors had to be aware of their status. Later death records for some of the children continue to list them as “white” while some of them married and changed back to being black (to match their partners). Daniel, Nancy, and some of their children are buried in the McCord Cemetery in Oaklondon." Now for the rest of the story, Dan Vail a local farmer called, and he has discovered that his family farms the Chives Farm in Vernon Township. He's got the paperwork to prove it. Good job Linda and Dan. If any of you have any more hidden history fact about Hancock County let me know at Jskvarenina@hotmail.com

2021-01-01

By Joe Skvarenina

The Steele family were settlers in Buck Creek Township. Franklin and his three sons farmed substantial acreage and worked with livestock. Son Paul was involved in the establishment of the Indiana Farm Bureau by soliciting memberships in 1919. John Steele was the first person to bring Shorthorn cattle into Hancock County. Paul farmed with mules and horses until tractors were developed. Some of the Steele acreage became M. Comfort Airport land. Currently here is some road work being planned around 600W. In a report, Candace Hudziak describes a Steele home which might be affected, "a successful and prosperous farming family that wanted a "Progressive" house. The house is atypical in porch placement, window placement, and chimney treatment. The house's finishes are high-style: brick and variegated slate (both of which would have required rail transport, the brick from Indianapolis; the slate, from Vermont) and leaded Craftsman-style windows. These qualities of the house make it a rival to the better examples of Craftsman/Prairie-influenced large houses, even in Indianapolis. Certainly, in Hancock County, it has few competitors. The property's collection of farm buildings reinforces the rural setting of the property. The wooden Western transverse-frame barn is a significant and intact example of vernacular design in and of itself." This house belonged to brother Samuel. If you go north on Mt. Comfort Road you cannot help but notice it.

Speaking of houses, I had asked about an old house on State Street. Jim Shelby tells us, "Charlie and Lillian Hull were my cousins. Lillian's mother and father, Mr. and Mrs. Thomas lived there. According to Lillian her parents lived at 404 even though they owned the Gem elevator and farmland around Gem. I remember her mother living there and Lillian caring for her as Lillian lived around the corner on 5th street in the Hinchman house. It was very convenient for both." Theo Bowman had also done research on the house and has the prices it has sold for over the years.

Enough I have told you everything that I know and some things I don't. Talk to me at jskvarenina@hotmail.com or the Daily Reporter.

2020-12-25

By Joe Skvarenina

Around 1935 Emma Schramm Vonnegut translated into English the letters of her grandfather, Jacob Schramm and his family, from Indiana to Germany in the year 1836 for her children and grandchildren. In 1954 the Indiana Historical Society received a gift of the Schramm papers which included 78 volumes of diaries, two account books, miscellaneous manuscripts, and some printed items. The diaries were kept by Wilhelm August Schramm son of Jacob Schramm and extended from 1851-1908. These works were a great source for information on early Hancock County farm life. Items like the conversion of swamps into farmland by draining and tilling, building roads, preparing the virgin soil for ploughing and harvesting, also farm tools and equipment from homemade items to sophisticated machinery. These books also gave information field crops, orchards, as well as livestock raised. The writings provide a glimpse of family and social life in rural Indiana. For example, "My memory to a log cabin set down among the large trees...The cabin had a large fireplace where the baking and cooking was done...There my grandmother told stories of their earlier years in the wilderness, for instance, how she used to tie a string from tree to tree when she went out in the woods so that she could find her way back to the house...In the later years a little white church (Zion Lutheran) was built and to it my grandmother went regularly as long as she lived..."

The Schramm papers have been reprinted by the Indiana Historical Society and the last I knew the Hancock County Historical Society had a few copies.

Do you have any family Christmas traditions? On Christmas Eve we go to my grandmother's for dinner, exchange of presents, midnight services and when we go home, we ate manna and honey. I don't know the significance. What are your traditions.

Enough. I told you everything that I know and some things I don't. Talk to me at Jksvarenina@hotmail.com or the Daily Reporter.

2020-12-18

Old School

By Joe Skvarenina

Dave Huffman wants to know could you tell him anything about the old school that was at the corner of North & Pratt streets?

Brad's Phillips 66 Service Station was at the corner of East Main and Pratt Street (currently Rick's Auto Body...the last I knew). In the 1950's the Phillips 66 Station was run by Harold Bradbury (father of our past Sherriff, Jim). The lot behind the station was an empty weed lot, and kids would mow the weeds in the summer to make a baseball diamond and play baseball. Years earlier, there was in fact, a school building on that lot. The school was in a building that was called the Longfellow Building. That lot is bounded by East Main, Pratt, and North St. and an ally along the West side. Currently, two apartment building are on the lot.

Going west there was a business and past muffler shop on the corner of Main and Pennsylvania Streets next Bradley United Methodist Church. The muffler shop and other businesses is adjacent to the old movie theater was on the Northeast corner."

The Longfellow School Building, 520 East main Street was at the site. The school was built in 1883 at a cost of \$5400. It was torn down in 1925. Until recently a portion of the wall around the lot remained. There aif re now apartments at the site. The teachers in 1915 and 1916 were Anna Jackson, Elizabeth Hanes, Kate Martin and Iduna Barrett.

In 1905 Greenfield had five schools. High School was held for a brief period at the Old West Building. Lincoln had four teachers and Washington had six. The high school had 17 instructors. East Greenfield was a one room schoolhouse.

The Old Lincoln School was located on the corner of Pennsylvania and Pierson Streets. it was opened in 1890 at a cost of \$5,946 and was close in 1934. Later when the Boys Club was formed, it was used as a clubhouse. It was remodeled and reopened as a school in 1948. It was closed again May 29, 1969. Today there are apartments at the site and I have been told that some of the bricks were used in the construction of the apartments.

Enough. I have told you everything that I know and some things I don't. Talk to me at jskvarenina@hotmail.com or at the Daily Reporter.

2020-12-11

By Joe Skvarenina

Doug Magers in New Castle send us information on the family of Weir Cook from Wilkinson. Cook was born in the town on June 30, 1892. He was a WW I flyer ace and had shot down seven German planes. He was a member of Captain Eddie Rickenbacker's 94th Aero Squadron. For his service he was awarded the distinguished flying cross and the French Croix de Guerre. Following WWI he became one of the first airmail pilots and flew with the Army Corps until 1929. It was through his efforts that Indianapolis was included as an airline stop in the New York to St. Louis airmail route. Later Cook was the general manager for the Curtis-Wright in Indiana. Charles Lindbergh visited with Cook at Curtis Flying Headquarters at 957 N. Meridian Street. Cook was active with the promotion of flying with the youth at the time. He was one of the sponsors of the "Conquest for the Skies", a nationwide model airplane show. He organized the "Flying Cadets Corps" and had a radio program on WLW Cincinnati during the 1930's. He taught many young men how to fly. He was a member of the American Legion Aeronautic Commission and was a frequent speaker to veterans and civic groups throughout the United States. He was assigned to the National Guard as an aviation instructor and was recalled in 1941. He was transferred to the Air Force in 1943. He died in a P-39 crash on March 24, 1943 at New Caledonia where he was in command of local American Air bases. Cook was too old for participation in WWII but he was sent to the Pacific and given a command. In 1944 the Indianapolis Airport was named Weir Cook. He is buried in the Punchbowl Cemetery in Hawaii. There is a Weir Cook Park in Wilkinson.

Enough. I have told you everything that I know and some things I don't. Talk to me at Jskvarenina@hotmail.com or the Daily Reporter

2020-12-05

By Joe Skvarenina

Have you ever heard of the National Horse Thief Association? The sixty sixth annual session was held on October 5-6, 1926 in Franklin Indiana. This organization according to the publication was to cooperate with all citizens, officials and or organizations in the county and state in maintaining the supremacy of law and securing its proper enforcement. It was the duty of the Horse Thief Detective Association to uphold the actions and to assist the sheriffs, police officers, prosecuting attorneys, and courts in the protection of our citizenship against the invasion of murderer, banditry, thief, and felon and insist on the apprehension and conviction of such criminals. The real aim was to gain the confidence of the courts and peace officers, legislature, and the law-abiding citizens of Indiana. In addition, according to their publication the sheriffs of some counties were ready to appoint the members as deputies if they are recommended by the Association. Our own Ora Myers from Greenfield was a delegate, and he was a member Hancock Horse Detective Thief Association No. 126. Myers was mayor of Greenfield 1910-1914 and 1917-1921. He was an attorney and also Greenfield Postmaster. In Hancock County had the following chapters: Brandywine #26 ,30 members; Buck Creek #30, 19 members; Fortville #96, 110 members; Hancock #126, 124 members; Gem #179, 95 members; McCordsville #28 ,39 members; New Palestine # 113, 80 members; and Carrollton #34, 34 members. Did you ever hear of this organization? The year 1926 was the height of the Klan period throughout Indiana. I have heard it said by several people in the community that it was a cover for the Klan. According to James Madison book on Indiana History, "The Klan first appeared in Indiana in 1920 and by 1923 was organizing klavens and holding rallies and parades throughout the state. Membership by that summer numbered around hundred thousand Hoosiers, making Indiana one of the nation's largest Klan strongholds."

Enough I have told you everything that I know and somethings I don't. Talk to me at the jskvaenina@hotmail.com or the Daily Reporter.

2020-11-27

By Joe Skvarenina

Dennis Meyer, Meyer Financial Services, shared with me an 1897 Class Day Exercises program for Center Township Schools which would have been May 27, 1897 in the Old Masonic Building. That was before the school wars and consolidation. In those days, the Center Township Trustee was the head of the schools. At that time, his name was J.K. Hemby.

In 1969 consolidation of the Green and Center Townships' schools consolidated into what is now Greenfield-Central CSC. I have understood that the vote was very close, and the feelings of consolidation were not mutual between the townships. In addition, on August 1, 1955, Eden and Maxwell Schools were consolidated and Hancock Central School began operation in September. The upper six grades occupied a building in Maxwell and the elementary grades were in the Eden building. If you go to the Eden building today you will find the cornerstone and the stone from the front entrance on a hill in the parking area.

The first years was not easy for the lifetime rivals. This system or Hancock Central lasted for 14 years. The first school board had three out of five members from Green Township. These board members were Marion Jackson, Thomas Butcher and Gene Pope.

The Eden School had always been a vital part of the Green Township community. Neighbors in this community always gathered at basketball games and class plays and Christmas programs and to discuss problems at the PTA. Some say that consolidation took away some of the community closeness.

In 1969 the Greenfield Central Community School Corporation was approved by voters by 1294 to 1211. Center Township outside the City of Greenfield and Green Township voted against the consolidation 5 to 1. Bigger got better.

Enough. I have told you everything that I know and some things I don't. Talk to me at jskvarenina@hotmail.com or the Reporter.

2020-11-20

By Joe Skvarenina

The first settlers came into Hancock County in 1818 probable on the Napoleon Trace or Buffalo Road which some say is 700 East. They settled in Blue River Township. The land was divided into Townships and then into sections to do so a hole 8 to 10 inches deep was dug. Here a corner was established, and a stone was placed in the hole to establish the exact location of the corner. At least two witness trees were designated, blazed, and notched to be able to find the location of the rock from the trees. An exact record of the marker was made in the surveyor's book for the location of the stone from the trees. Some people from the day say you could still find the rock or the stake in the hole after many years If you travel to the southeast corner of the courthouse you will find one of those rocks surrounded by sidewalk. Go look. I believe it is a corner marker.

Tom Vanduyn and his friend Jim Miller to shares with us certificates to improve the gravel roads n Brown, Greens, and Vernon Townships. The bond is worth \$485 dollars, and it is one of twenty. It is issued July 18, 1914.the Commissioners at the time were Albea, George Allen and Jack Bressel. The auditor was Lawrence Wood. Interesting way to finance roads.

They also share letters proposing to buy the Newman and Barnard Mill in Mohawk dated 1895. The Mohawk Lumber Company was founded by Oliver Arch Newman in 1880. A sawmill was built first. Then after a fire in 1909, another mill was constructed and was operated by M. Newman son Frank. Does anyone know the location?

Enough. I have told you everything that I know and some things I don't. Talk to me at jskvrenina@otmail.com or the Library.

Jane, I will give you the copies you might want to run one. Sorry about the above I cannot seem it get it back in order.

2020-11-13

By Joe Skvarenina

LeRoy Heath writes, "50 plus years ago I was out with grandparents putting flowers at cemeteries and we stopped at one I think was in Hancock Co. There was a grave with 3 women on each side. They told me the man in middle had outlived 6 or 7 wives. Do you know anything about that, and what cemetery we were at?"

LeRoy I Sue Baker's book my resident cemetery expert Sue Baker who wrote the authoritative book on Hancock County Grave Yards and Tombstones and I am sorry to admit we need more information. Do you remember the location at all? How about the rest of you? Do any of you know about this burial.

Baker's book includes burials from 1833 to 1933. There are ninety-two cemeteries in the county. As an example there are five in Brandywine and Vernon Townships and eighteen in Sugar Creek and Center Townships. You can learn much history at these sites. I have done some research on the Gilboa Cemetery. It seems that at one time there was a Gilboa Methodist Church at the locality. The congregation started in the 1830's with a log church. In 1852 a frame building was built at the cemetery. The Rev Amos Spark was the first preacher. In the 1880's it reach its peak with forty five members. A decade later it only had six members and the congregation closed. In the early 1900's the building was removed. Do any of you know if the building is still in existence? At the location there is five soldiers from the War of 1812, two from the Mexican American War, and eighteen from the Civil War. Gilboa is also the Hatfield family burying plot. John T. Hatfield was the founder of the Cleveland Camp Ground. Hatfield himself isn't buried at Gilboa but is laid to rest in Hollywood California. Gilboa is located in Blue River Township and I do believe that the old Napoleon Trace is nearby.

Enough. I have told you everything that I know and some things I don't. Talk to me.

2020-11-06

By Joseph Skvarenina

Christina Gibbs writes I was given your information at the library." I'm looking for a copy of the book you published about the veterans from Hancock country. I know it has a green cover and includes veterans from all the wars. I have recently found out my great uncle was killed in WWI, William Vandine, and is published in your book". We have very little information about him. I also noticed the coffee cup and saucer in your case at the library and wondered where it was from? St. John is my great grandmas last name on my dad's side. Thank you, for any information you might have." The book Christina is looking for is entitled, " Hancock County Military Commemorative". Larry Fox and I issued the book in 1999. There are no more in print. But I did find some information.

William Walter VanDine was born in Brown Township November 23, 1888, the son of William and Mary Malissa VanDine. He spent much of his life in Brown Township. He was educated in Shirley Schools. He was a laborer and the time of his enlistment in the United States Army. He fought in France as a member of Company G Fourth Infantry. He was killed in action July 25, 1918. He is buried in the American Cemetery, No. 608, Seringes-et-Nesles, Aisne, France.

Premier Indiana Historian James Madison has written a new book about the Klux Klan in the Midwest. He obtains some photos from Paul at the Greenfield Library. I am sure that it is available at the Indiana Historical Society

Enough. I have told you everything that I know and some things I don't. Talk to me at jskvarenina@hotmail.com or at the Reporter.

2020-10-30

By Joe Skvarenina

Amy Miller tells us about a trail project which will develop a trail system that is 1 mile around the town of Shirley's existing park. The trail will also connect to a trailhead at the Historic Jane Ross Reeves Octagon House. The Jane Ross Reeves Octagon House is on the National Register of Historic Places and was originally located between Wilkinson, Indiana and Willow Branch, Indiana. It was moved to its present location in 1997. It is currently located at 400 Railroad Street in Shirley, Indiana. There are only five octagon houses left standing in the state of Indiana. The Reeves Octagon House is deemed to be the most important one as it has never been altered or changed with the exception of the porch; it now goes around the entire house. The Jane Ross Reeves Foundation is granting the town an easement to install the new trailhead. The trail will also be following alongside the Trail Depot. The Town park will get a new softball field, upgrades to the existing softball diamond.

Joseph Reel writes" my wife, and I are in the process of buying a home located at 328 E North Street in Greenfield from the current caretaker, Pamela Moncrief-Allen. I believe she and her husband have lived there since the early 1970's.

We'd love to find photos of the home as it was when built or in the early 1900's and obtain information regarding prior owners. Does such a repository exist? How to access it? We have good friends that purchased a farmhouse in Maxwell and would like to obtain similar information for that property." Records at the Recorder or the Auditor's office Court House Annex is a good place to start. Does anyone have any photos of this property? The Hancock County Interim Report tells us that then house was built circa 1890 and the architecture style was Carpenter.

The Hancock Interim report was done in 1983. There are copies on the shelves in the Library. It was published in 1983 and designed to be used by various project. Enough I have told you everything that I know, and some things I don't. Talk to me at Jksvarenina@hotmail.com or through the Daily Reporter.

2020-10-23

By Joseph Skvarenina

Greg Murphy writes, "Forgive me if I previously sent you the Veterans photos, I can't remember if I did. I believe it's a GAR reunion but not certain. My grandmother Murphy saved these photos, she lived in Hancock County all of her life and I can't imagine her saving any photo that does not pertain to our county.

Like I mentioned, the one photo I believe is a Veteran photo. The store window has "Druggist" on it, I also see a sign at the top stating "Paint". I don't recognize this building but I believe it could be and most likely is here in Greenfield. Any guess?

The other photo was taken in 1871 of a group of men, notice the anvil setting in front. I don't recognize the building but I wonder if this photo is of men who built the railroad through Mohawk or Greenfield. My grandmother's sister married Jim Flanagan, he worked on the RR in Mohawk and then was transferred to Muncie, IN"

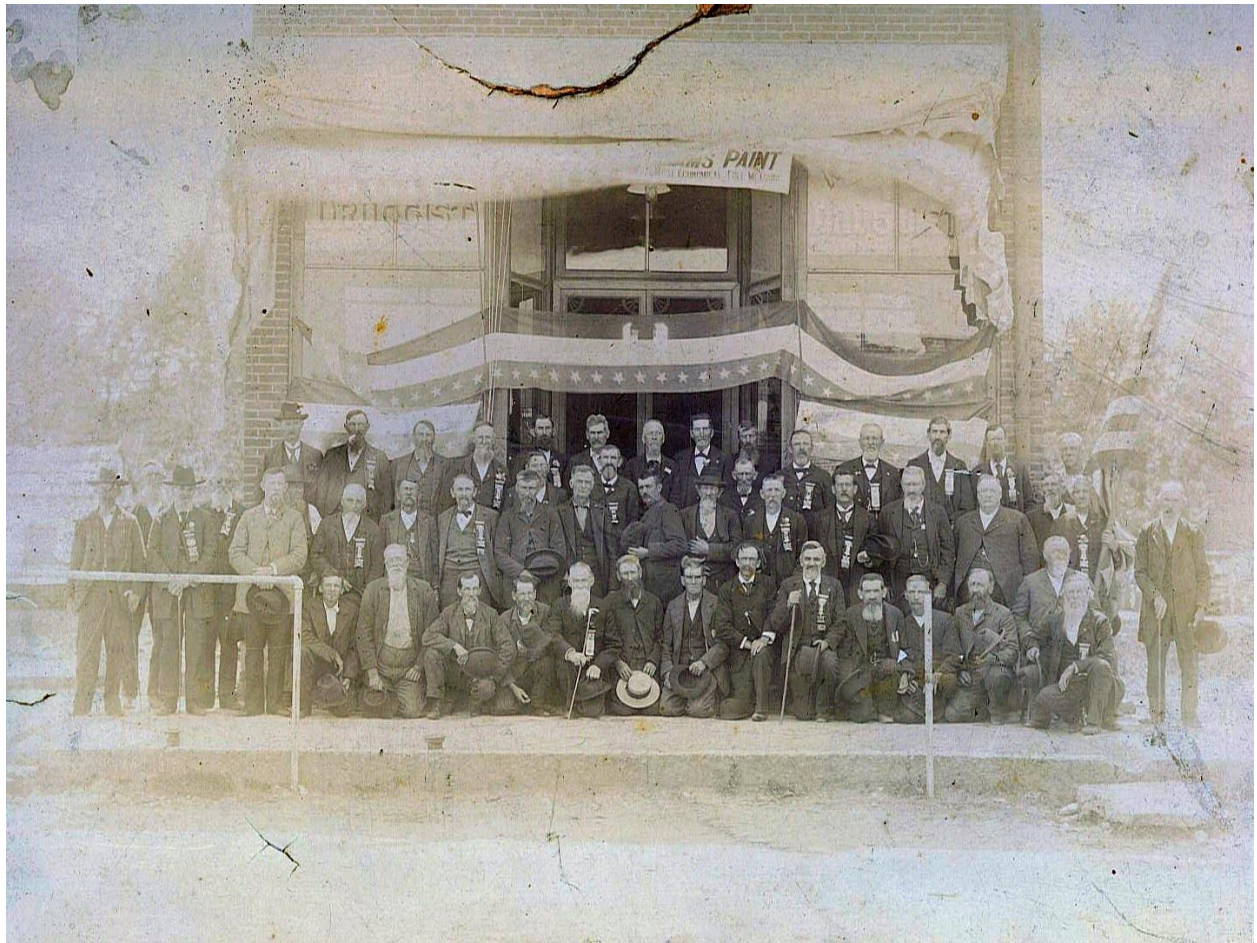
I did presentation at the Indianapolis Civil War round table the other day and I met Jennifer Thompson who has done a wonderful four volume set on the history of the Bloody Eighth Volunteer Regiment. Lincoln called for troop and Indiana quota was 4,000 plus but 12,000 enlisted. Reuben Riley and Henry Snow went to the various communities in Hancock County with a fife and drum corp to build enthusiasm and the result was Company G of the Eighth. Other companies were formed in Henry, Randolph, Madison, Wabash, Grant and three in Wayne Counties. When these men were mustered out a reception for the troops was held in Pierson's Grove south west of Greenfield, West of Pennsylvania Street. This was on August 5.

Soldier Samuel Dunbar sent letters to the Hancock County Democrat from the front which were published in the newspaper. Eventually the Greenfield GAR Post was named for Dunbar. Dunbar died and was buried on the bank of a bayou in Louisiana and later was brought home and buried in Park Cemetery. Another veteran was Samuel Shelby died in Jan. 30, 1936 and was the last Civil War Veteran of the Samuel H. Dunbar Grand Army of the Republic Post (GAR). I will leave Jennifer's book in the history room for those doing family research they might be handy. Many interesting veteran bios.

In the Eight Indiana Regiment 784 were mustered out, they lost seven men by death (four killed or mortally wounded and three by disease), fifteen by desertion and one man married. Enough. Can you help Greg identify his photos? Talk to me at jskvarenina@hotmail.com or the Daily Reporter.



Picture taken in 1871, unknown individuals



Possibly a veterans gathering in Hancock County, n.d.

2020-10-16

By Joseph Skvarenina

Craig Brendt writes, "I'm not well-versed in THI&E. A group that tracks existing railroad structures lists the Riley Tire building as a former interurban car barn. They don't have any dates for it.

A fellow railfan who knows the THI&E better gave me a quick rundown of the Indy-Richmond section. The histories of the various companies is dizzying.

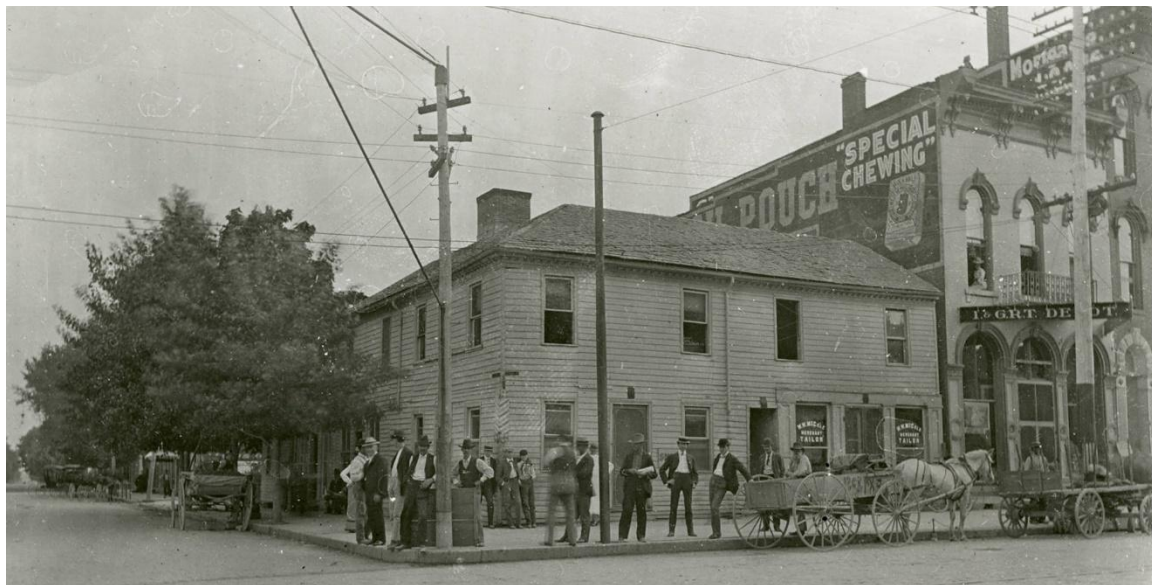
Look at the attached photos. Note the I&GRT Depot (Indianapolis & Greenfield Rapid Transit Co.) sign on the building at right in one of the photos. I&GRT was an 1899 company that built the Indy-Greenfield line and extended it later to Charlottesville."

I&GRT was operated by the Indianapolis & Eastern Traction Co. in and after 1901. These two companies formed Central Traction Co. in 1901, to extend the line to Knightstown, which was completed in 1902. Did you know that the Interurban tracks are still under the payment on the south side of 40? Greenfield businessmen promoted the Interurban Line between Greenfield and Indianapolis, Construction was awarded to C.M. Kirkpatrick of Greenfield work started in 1899 with the line regularly carrying passengers on July 17, 1900

The Depot for the Indianapolis Greenfield Rapid Transit would have been at the location of community corrections. building.

Enough. I have told you everything that I know and some things I don't. Talk to me a Jskvarenina@hotmail.com or the Daily Reporter.

"Greenfield, IN – I&GRT Depot c1900"



“Greenfield, IN – Main Street lk W THI&E Depot 1909”



2020-10-09

By Joe Skvarenina

Linda Dunn writes "I finished my rough draft of the History of blacks in Hancock County with a little over 200 pages with most of this being short biographical sketches of black residents of Hancock County. It was enlightening. I went through 100 years of online census records for all the townships and I am very glad we have online copies. I cross-checked names found with searches through newspapers.com archives, etc. " Linda is providing us with a much-needed piece of history about our black population. It is a hidden history. For example, the Indiana Historical Society tells about white men married to mulatto women in Sugar Creek Township. Linda Dunn adds to this hidden history when she tells, 'The one mixed family I found in Vernon Township flipped this script as a white woman was married to a "mulatto" man. Linda goes on to add, "Daniels Chives (the last name is spelled at least four different ways on the documents I found) and the children were listed as "mulatto" but Daniel's wife, Nancy, was not. They married March 8, 1815 in Clermont, Ohio and are listed in the 1830 census records in that community. The 1840 census shows them in Vernon Township and Daniel is a farmer. The 1850 census shows the same and Daniel died 16 Jun 1856. All the census records either list Nancy as white or simply don't list her as black. Sometime between his death and the 1870 census, without moving from Vernon Township and with McCordsville listed as their post office, the adult children in that household with Nancy became white. A couple of them reverted back to being black after they married black partners and relocated.

Passing is not uncommon but blacks usually had to relocate when doing this and Vernon Township was sufficiently small that their neighbors had to be aware of their status. Later death records for some of the children continue to list them as "white" while some of them married and changed back to being black (presumably to match their partners).

Daniel, Nancy, and some of their children are buried in the McCord Cemetery in Oaklandon." Good job Linda. If any of you have any more hidden history fact about Hancock County let me know at Jskvarenina@hotmail.com

2020-10-02

By Joe Skvarenina

Here is a photo of the Wolf Old Crist Mill Wheel from the Blue River Township It is now outside of Lizabuth Ann's kitchen at the Riley Home Museum. It was donated by Sara Wolf and family in memory of her father. Some time ago Sara Wolf had me pick up the old mill wheel from Wolf Mill which was at her dad's house. Wolf's Mill was in Blue River Township. A grist mill and sawmill was erected in 1824 by Joshua Wilson along the Blue River near where the range line crosses it. The mill operated about two years until Henry Watts purchased it. Watts attached a bolt to enable the mill to run by hand. 1826 the mill was moved to a point on the Blue River below the Hancock County line. People from Rush, Shelby and Hancock Counties did business at the site. John Wolf purchased the mill in 1840 and later by a man named Bacon bought it. For several years, the mill was known as Bacon Mill. Later one Jacob Wolf purchased the mill and operated until the late 1890's. It was during this time that the mill burned down. I have been told you can still see the mill race. The first mill in the county erected by Joshua Wilson in 1824. It was above the Wolf Mill. Mills were one of the first business endeavors of the early pioneers out of necessity.

A sawmill was erected about 1830 by James P. New, Abraham Miller and Silas Moore on Nameless Creek, just east of Westland and operated until 1855. A sawmill was erected immediately south of Cleveland during the early 70's. It was moved from Leamon's Corner in Jackson Township and operated by Thomas L. Marsh and others. In 1881 it was moved to Eden and operated by C. Mingle. Other sawmills were operated by John Hunnicut on Nameless Creek, Jesse Hunt, Lewis Rule, and King Lewis, Caleb Pusey, and Charles Bash. It was in Blue River Township the first railroad was constructed in 1846, the Knightstown Shelbyville. It began to operate in 1848. In the early 50's there was a pottery factory now occupied by the Western Grove Church. Later Isaac Beeson began manufacturing tile at the site. He was one of the first to do so in the county.

Enough. I have told you everything that I know something's I don't. Talk to me at JSkvarenina @ hotmail.com or the Daily Reporter.



2020-09-25

By Joe Skvarenina

My dad told me that there were no other Skvarenina families in the United States. We were the only family, my dad and me, his brother Rudy whose children were all girls. My grandfather had come over from the old country in 1910 from city of Halboný in the Austro-Hungarian Empire today Slovakia. As a child and a grown up I was commonly asked if I could spell my last name and I would often respond with one word, "Yes". You must admit it is an unusual surname and it means blacksmith. But as the years go on there are increased people doing family research so maybe there was hope. I was surprised the other day when I received a call from Professor of Electrical Engineering, Tim Skvarenina, from Purdue University. We met for lunch and couldn't find out how we are related. Tim tells that there is a Skvarenina family web site and several family groupings all over the country. My next birthday I wanted an ancestor.

Here are some tips, if you have an older relative now is the time to interview, record and have a transcript done. There is no better historian than a family member. Do it before it is too late. Also, Indiana publicly recorded marriages prior to statehood when the area was known as the Northwest Territory. Marriage records exist as early as around 1780. Hancock County marriages were first recorded in court records as early as 1828. Applications and certificates of marriage were not recorded until 1882. Prior to 1877 boys seventeen years old and girls fourteen years old could get a license to marry with the consent of a parent or guardian. Cousins could also marry. About 1877 the law was changed to boys age eighteen and girls age sixteen. Marriage of cousins not allowed. In 2015 court rulings allow same-sex couples to marry. Currently, the law is age eighteen without consent, seventeen with consent, and fifteen with parental and judicial consent. In addition, each county has an index of the names of persons and firms contained in early histories, atlases, gazettes etc. In 1940 the Works Progress Administration recorded such for Hancock County.

Enough. I have told you everything that I know and some things I don't. Talk to me at jskvarenina@hotmail.com or the Daily Reporter

2020-09-18

An unique old barn

By Joe Skvarenina

Tom Vanduyn provides us with this story about an unique barn. This particular barn is located on County Line 1100 N in Brown Township in Northern Hancock County. It sets back from the farm buildings at least 300 yards from Sugar Creek. The current property owner is Zachary Seal. Zachary is interested in this old barn with an unique internal structure. Wings on the barn have been added over the years. The original owners, the Collins family, made land entries 1833 and 1834. Thomas Collins was born in Gallia, Ohio and died in 1878 in Hancock County. He is buried in the Collins Cemetery just east of the old house along the banks of Sugar Creek. The structure has two square large sections made of hued logs which could have only come from virgin forest. The logs go all the way up to the rafters. I placed a yardstick by two of the logs and the logs measured 36 inches side by side. I have yet to see a structure so big and enormous made from native forest. The plat map of Brown Township in 1877 shows a Greek Revival house back a lane that sat just east of the log barn. It is now gone.

Thomas Collins purchased 100 acres at the site for \$400. He had two wives and raised eleven at the homestead. When the children left home he gave each \$3000 and provided well for his widow. He was a member of the ME Church. Tom provides us photographs of the barn.

Mr. VanDuyn is a past president of the Upper White River Valley Archeological Association and a member of the board of the Hancock County Historical Society.

2020-09-11

By Joe Skvarenina

Linda Dunne writes, "Do you know where the fairgrounds were located in 1875? The William Kemmer lynching took place in 1875 and I discovered I was wrong to believe this is at the Hancock County regional hospital site as the fairgrounds. I found: "In 1857 it was moved to the south side of the railroad, east of Brandywine Creek, on land belonging to Samuel Milroy." I have not yet found anything about it being moved between then and 1879."

The first agricultural association was organized in June 1835 at the Courthouse. According to the Binford history of Hancock County an agricultural association was organized in 1856 for the purpose of conducting fairs. The first fair was held in Greenfield on the east side of town north of the National Road. In 1857 the fair was held on the south side of the railroad, east of the Brandywine Creek, on the land belonging to Samuel Milroy. A fire destroyed the floral hall and it was not rebuilt. The last fair at this site was held in 1879. On December 21, 1865 Boyd's Grove north of Greenfield, now the hospital property, was selected as a fairgrounds. When they built the hospital they found the foundations of the old cattle barn. Later to that the fair was held at the current site.

No one was ever received in Hancock County with greater celebration when William Jennings Bryan came the first time in 1900. He was pulled into to town down Main Street in a carriage with a team of white horses. A cannon on the Court House lawn saluted his arrival. He spoke to a group 20,000 people at the Fairgrounds which would have been the current hospital property or Boyd's Grove. He was truly the "Great Commoner."

Enough. I have told you everything that I know and some things I don't talk to me at jskvarenina@hotmail.com or the Daily Reporter.

2020-09-04

By Joe Skvarenina

Candy Hudziak writes, "I am the historian working on the CR 600W (Mt Comfort Rd) improvement project and I'm researching the Steele Farm at 4993 N CR 600W (in the southeast quadrant of 600W and 500N) which was rated notable in the county survey report (the second highest rating). In looking at historic plat maps I noticed another Steele Farm not too far away. Have you come across any information about this family in your county history research before? Are any relatives still in the area that you know of? I spoke to the current property owner and he didn't have any information about the house" Yes there are more Steele's. In 1885 Franklin Steele and others attempted to stop the dredging of Buck Creek. Ebenezer Steele established a tile factory along the middle of the south side of section 8, township 16, range 6. In 1882 at the southeast corner of the northeast quarter section 16, township 16, range 6 he erected a saw mill. Also Franklin Steele signed a petition for a sanitary inspection of District 5 School at Mt. Comfort. In the winter of 1913-1914 the school was condemned after the inspection. In 1915 Franklin Steele paid \$3,558.54 in property taxes. A.W. Steele and O.C. Steele participated in the drug and grocery business in the area.

Then go to the Recorder's office to get deeds for the property. Any property transfers should be recorded at the Auditor's office. Use the most recent reports and work backward. She'll use the names you find here to help in the research.

Regarding property history, unless some sort of history was written on the house, I doubt she'll find much about it beyond general information. There may be something about the farm in the county histories. It just depends. Some courthouse records may include structural information and some basic property layout but it would be rare to see photos or any materials documenting the house in great detail.

That being said, you would come to the library to research individuals that owned or lived on the property. You can find these people from the property records. There are a lot of Steeles in the area so it would be beneficial to have a first name.

Steele was a surname of interest, I've included the entries for Steel/Steele from the WPA Name Index. Directions on using the index are included. She will find many of the resources mentioned on the library's [Genealogy page](#). The Library has other indexes depending on how far you wants to take the info, including death, newspapers, wills and probates.

Enough. I have told you everything that I know and some things I don't. Talk to me.

2020-08-28

By Joe Skvarenina

Did you notice the new historical marker in town on Main Street. Thanks to Ninestar and David Spencer we are finally recognizing Will Vawter and his contribution to the community.

The Golden Age of Indiana of Literature, Art and Music was between 1870 and 1920. During this period the eyes the nation was focused on our Hoosier state. During those 50 years there was a "Hoosier Phenomenon" in literature and the fine arts. Hoosier's were only second best to New York with the sheer numbers of authors with books according to Publishers Weekly. Also, during this time American's were looking for their own unique style of art and American impressionism came into popularity. Vawter was heavily influenced by the impressionistic style of this Hoosier Group.

John William Vawter was born in 1870 in West Virginia and moved with his family to Greenfield in 1880. "Will" as he was called worked as an illustrator for the Hancock County Democrat and the Indianapolis Sentinel. In November 1891 he began illustrating for the Indianapolis News.

In 1893 his big break came when the Indianapolis Journal asked him to illustrate in a special edition a full-page poem by James Whitcomb Riley. This special edition was produced to coincide with a large national gathering of the GAR (Grand Army of the Republic) The newspaper prominently featured Vawter's illustrations of the poem, "Amazindy: A Born Soldier and Hero" on September 5, 1893.

By the time Vawter started illustrations of Riley Poems, the Hoosier poet received national renown. Riley was known for using Hoosier dialect to create poems with the spirit of the Hoosier soil. Vawter also honed his artistic skills by observing life around him. The Riley Vawter pairing initiated by the Indianapolis Journal initiated a long creative partnership. In 1898 Bowen Merrill reissued a collection of Riley Poems "Riley Child Rhymes and Vawter's illustrations were heavily featured in the book.

In an interview with the Indianapolis News Riley said, "It was very gratifying to find an artist who is unconsciously aware of the situation and who understands his own intimate surroundings. Will Vawter is such an artist. There is no vagueness in his interpretations of the poems in this book. He is a Greenfield boy and native. As an artist he depicts people in no patronizing way...They are taken in a realistic spirit. He is of them."

Riley's appreciation of Vawter grew over the years evidenced by the sheer numbers of time the author paired with the artist. I count at least 16 works of Riley. Vawter also illustrated books of other Greenfield authors. In addition to his sister Clara Vawter, "Rabbits Ranson" he illustrated John Clark Redpath's "Epic of Life"; Adelia Pope Branham, "Grandma Tales and Others"; and Barton Rees Pogue's "Fortunes in Friendships".

At the turn of the century with many new magazines being published Illustrators were in sorely needed around the country and he was in high demand by publishers.

In 1909 Vawter left Greenfield for Brown County. In 1920 he with fellow artist Adolph Schulz established the "Brown County Art Gallery" His works were exhibited at Marshall Field & Co in Chicago, the Hoosier Salon in the 1930's and the Lieber Gallery in Indianapolis.

Vawter traveled nationally to refresh his work. Some say he was a late blooming artist who did his best work in later years. "A spiritual connection to nature so beautiful it could be sensed second handed by the viewer" His works included tranquil seascapes, the Great Smokey Mountains, NE Coast of Maine, and of course Brown County Landscapes"

His last one-man show was in 1940. A few months later he passed away in February 1941. John Will Vawter is buried in the Greenfield Cemetery. His studio is probably on third floor of the Thayer Building. On the wall is painted "Vawter March 17, 1891". His house is north of the Memorial Building on the west side of the street. It is a private residence.

I have told you everything that I know and some things I don't. Talk to me at jskvarenina@hotmail.com or the Daily Reporter.

2020-08-21

By Joe Skvarenina

I understand that the Greenfield Presbyterian Church is for sale. It is a beautiful structure. This current Presbyterian Church was erected in 1906 at the corner of Pennsylvania and South Streets. The total cost was \$24,000. The cornerstone was laid on September 21, 1906 with the Dr. D.W. Fisher officiating. He was the president of Hanover College. The church was dedicated April 14, 1907, by the Reverend J.W. Powell. The bell from the third courthouse is in the belfry. This is their second building.

The Presbyterian Church of Greenfield was founded organized on July 30, 1855 with 18 members. Initially the Congregation worshiped in the Old Masonic building on the corner of the National Road and Pennsylvania. In 1868 a new church was built on the corner of South and Pennsylvania Street. The Pastor was Rev. Isaac W. Monfort. This building is historically significant to the community. I hope the right person buys it.

By the way Curry' Chapel is the oldest continual operating church in Hancock county. Nameless Creek is a close second. Curry's was organized in 1840. The present brick building was built in 1900 at a cost of \$4500.

Does any of you any the *knowledge* on the house at 404 North State Street. Mark Dudley says that Lillian Hull's mother lived in it for years?

Enough. i have told you everything I know and some things I don't. Talk to me at jskvarenina@hotmail.com or the Daily Reporter.

2020-08-14

Mr. and Mrs. George Knox

By Joe Skvarenina

In his autobiography George Knox looks back at life in early Greenfield. Knox became a successful barber in the Gooding Tavern Building, now the Greenfield City Hall. Knox was a civil war veteran, a former slave and later an influential black newspaper editor. Knox was born in Tennessee. In 1863 he crossed to the Union lines to become a mule driver and eventually he worked his way up to published of the Recorder newspaper. In 1865 he opened his barber shop. He made friends with Riley who painted the shaving mugs in his shop. Knox described Greenfield as a place where "prejudice was very high". But still Knox and his fellow black citizens made a fulfilling lives for themselves in Greenfield in spite of it. They established such organizations such as a literary club, debate society, a church, and a school. They also held camp meetings at Boyd's Grove, now the hospital property, for both races. In the decades following the Civil War race relations came to a head in Hancock County when groups of African Americans attempted move into the county. Barn were burned and livestock killed and warnings posted.

Historian Linda Dunn is looking for more information about Mrs. Knox. Linda tells us,

"Arilla married George Levy Knox 3 Oct 1865 in Marion County, Indiana.

In 1870, Arilla was listed as being married to George Knox, keeping house, living in Greenfield, and had the following inferred children: Willie (2) and Nellie (no age listed). Also in the household with them was Luna Harry (7), Nanny Patterson (20), Richard Bird (22), and George Russell (26). Richard and George were barbers and probably worked for George.

I've found records for the death of their daughter and their other son but there do not appear to be any children via them.

Two interesting notes about her from George's records are: (1) She was very light skinned and in one episode he describes, she is mistaken for a white woman consorting with a Negro male. (2) When George has having some trouble at the barber shop, word got back to her and after things were settled, George met her in the street. She was carrying his rifle and planning to help defend him."

Can you add to this. Enough. I have told you everything that I know and some things I don't. Talk to me at jskvarenina@hotmail.com or the Daily Reporter

2020-08-07

By Joe Skvarenina

Nancy Eccles writes, " I went to Walgreens for (Pictorial History of Hancock County) and they were sold out. Is there somewhere else I can buy one? My husband & I bought in 2012 what was Walls Villa Apts. and you helped us with some with its history. We finally found out that Walls bought it from Mullers and they bought it from Kaidens. But what I can't find out are Kaidens the ones who built it. There are no records back that far. I have a desire to learn as much as I can about that era. When we got this property it was owned by Mr. Reasner's family, he owned a drug store in greenfield years earlier. This property is just west of 200 west on the north side of hwy. 40 We still live here and have 6 houses & 13 apts. I hope I can find that book."

Can anyone answer Nancy's question? I am having a difficult time finding an answer about Kaidens. As more Americans took to the highway, the number of hotels grew rapidly between 1945 and 1951. During that time period there were about 500 motels in the state of Indiana. The Ross Motel in McCordsville on Route 67 built after WW II offered visitors spacious rooms with the newest of entertainment, the television. The Shamrock Court Motel was on Route 40, 13 miles east of Indianapolis was built in 1936. The brick row of 14 rooms in the Georgian style offered garages between units. It is now gone with just one building on the site. The Hoosierland Lodge was 10 miles of Indianapolis on Route 40 still exists today partially as a used car lot. The Weston in Greenfield is still used as a motel across from the doughnut shop and has had different names over the years. The Hoosier Poet Motel is four miles east of Greenfield on Route 40 at the corner of Route 209, probably 500 east and is a residence. Gas was cheap in those days and it was easy to go on an adventure. By the way the word motel was invented to designate a motoring hotel.

Enough. I have told you all that I know and somethings I don't. Talk to me at jskvarena@hotmail.com or the Daily Reporter.

2020-07-31

By Joe Skvarenina

Did you know that the Interurban tracks are still under the payment on the south side of 40. Greenfield businessmen promoted the Interurban Line between Greenfield and Indianapolis, Construction was awarded to C.M. Kirkpatrick of Greenfield work started in 1899 with the line regularly carrying passengers on July 17, 1900.

On September 12, 1904 the Indianapolis Traction Terminal opened as a central station for all traction companies coming into Indianapolis allowing them to better coordinate their services. In July 1905 the first joint ticket office was opened in Indianapolis. The first of its kind anywhere. It was the largest and busiest interurban terminal in the world. At its peak it handled 500 arrivals and departures per day. As the WW II approached the Interurban era grew to a close and only 14 electric railroads remained in Indiana. On December 31, 1946 the Interurban period officially ended when the Evansville and Ohio Valley made its final run The Terre Haute , Indianapolis, and Eastern Traction Line closed in Greenfield in around 1936. Riley Park Tire is an old Interurban barn. The tracks are still there. Also I have been told the Riley Park Tire served as a ammo dump and was guarded at one time by soldiers.what do you know about the Riley Park Building and the Interurban?

Tom Castaldi the Allen County Historian writes "a railroad/interurban history friend of mine here in Fort Wayne, asked me a question about the embedded photo he sent me. It's a scene from Greenfield, Ind., along an interurban line. He did not say when the photo was made, but stated, "looks like this interurban shelter (in Greenfield) was built over a former canal. Did a canal run due east from Indy?" This photo is on the east side of town and no we never had a canal.

Enough. Talk to me at jskvarenina@hotmail.com or the Daily Reporter.



2020-07-24

New Palestine Library and Mary Nichols.

By Joe Skvarenina

In the summer of 1984 people in New Palestine people in the community expressed a need for a library. In 1985 a New Pal Library was established in the Mary M. Nichols building lower level. It was leased from the American Legion Post #182 for one dollar a year. In 1985 the library secured a \$10,000 loan from the New Palestine Bank. A purchase of 10,000 titles was made from the Indianapolis Public School system for about \$500. By 1987 the facility was ready to open. Phyllis Arthur granddaughter of Mary M. Nichols cutting the ribbon. The Mary M. Nichols Library building was built around the turn of the 19th century. The two story brick building currently the museum replaced a small frame building. Henry C. and Sarah Nichols built the current building. He was the son of the Rev. William Nichols. Nichols operated a general store at the site. In 1910 Ellsworth Phares used the building for several years. He sold furniture, stoves, dry goods and groceries. It was also the site of the Post Office. John Ashcraft had a store there in 1934. Mary Nichols had given the building to the American Legion #182 to use as long as it existed. Charles Sleeth also adds to this story by reminding us that the building housed a kindergarten in 1954 which brought back pleasant memories to him. Do you have any pleasant memories of New Palestine?

Enough. I have told you everything that I know and some things I don't. Talk to me at jskvarenina@hotmail.com or the Daily Reporter.

2020-07-17

Women of Color

By Joe Skvarenina

Linda Dunn writes, "I have undertaken a perhaps foolish project of trying to find and record the history of the black women of Hancock County. I know there were black settlements and I know Greenfield had a decent sized black community. I have the history of George Knox and I started with him simply because there is so much more known about his family. Do you have any recommendations or warnings before I throw myself into this possibly time-wasting effort? " Yes I do. *William Trail a runaway slave was an early settler of Shirley. Mr. Trail and Mr. Jesse Johnson owned a farm on the west side of Shirley.* Trail was a good business man and before the Panhandle Railroad was built through Knightstown in 1853 he took loads of wheat to Cincinnati. it took him 5 to 7 days to make the trip. His great granddaughters Arthemias and Chotile taught school in Washington D.C. They were both born on the farm. The family was active in discrimination issues, education and they are worth looking into. Both girls graduated from college

Also Mrs. John Delany and her husband owned a tavern along the Brookville Road. When asked what percent they made John indicated when he bought something for \$1 and sold it for \$2 he didn't think they were doing so bad. They did business at the site until 1860. Mrs Delany was well known for the table she set. Both families were African American. The Delany Cemetery is at the site.

Enough. I have told you everything that I know and some things I don't. Contact me at jskvarenina@hotmail.com or the Daily Reporter.

2020-07-10

Family Bible

By Joe Skvarenina

Judith Collip writes, "I came across a family bible let week that was given to Sexson Family in 1954. While it is not that old, there were several clippings in it. One of which is a teacher's report from 1898. What do you suggest I do with it? I'm not one who traces genealogy, but would love to give it to someone who would appreciate it." There are Sexson family obits in the Bible, one Mr. Rex Sexson who died in 1974 ad was buried out of Hendryx Funeral Home in Greenfield. This is the current Greenfield Chamber of Commerce building. There is also a report card for Jesse Warrum dated December 28, 1898. Jesse got an 87 in Scientific Temperance and I am wondering about that subject?

Do you remember when we had funerals in the home. I do. in this one funeral the front door was too narrow and they had to take out the windows to get the casket into the house. In the early days funeral homes did business out of store fronts and viewings were always held in the homes. For example, Chancy Pasco came to Greenfield in 1912 and bought the C.W. funeral home at 27 Main Street which is now a vacant lot next to the Riley Emporium. It was a store front funeral home. In 1926 he purchased the M.C. Quigley funeral home at 312 East Main Street which he eventually operated as Pasco Brothers. Additions were added to the building in the 1940 's and 1950's. Today it is the Hancock County Community Foundation. If you want to claim the Sexson Bible please make contact.

Enough. Talk to me at JSkvarenina@hotmail.com or the Daily Reporter.

2020-07-03

Pandemic of 1918

Joe Skvarenina

Linda Dunn writes, “I wondered what your thoughts were on Hancock County’s response during the Pandemic of 1918. I’m forwarding some clippings I have from the local archives that I found of interest. I noticed that San Francisco had an “anti-mask protest” that didn’t gain much interest. Our only real protest seems to have been in Fortville where residents apparently became fed up with the openings and closures of schools, churches, and other institutions by then health official Whitham. They held a town meeting and apparently imposed stricter sanctions. “The Spanish Flu Pandemic appeared first with military personnel in the Spring of 1918. In Indiana the Spanish flu went from September 1918 till Feb 1919. Five hundred thousand people, 1/3 of the world's population died from the pandemic. In the United States there was 675,000 deaths with 290,000 being in Indiana. On Oct 6, 1918, the Indiana State Board of Health ordered the County or City Health Officers to close all schools, churches, amusements including pool rooms and picture theaters. Schools in Hancock were first closed for one month and at the end of the time the schools resumed operating. But the epidemic broke out again and the schools closed for a few more days. All schools lost about one month to ten days in time. When the schools did reopen many of them had only 50% attendance. Churches were closed for several weeks and you couldn't buy dish of ice cream or a soda in Greenfield. People also wore face masks for protection. This was one of the worst epidemics in memory for Hancock people. It was thought to have begun in the Orient and then spread to Europe and the United States. Most all families were affected by it. Sound familiar? You were also told not to spit on the sidewalk. J.K. Lilly committed the Lilly plant to full time efforts in developing a vaccine.

Enough. I have told you everything that I know and some things I don't. Talk to me at 317-518-1467 at the Daily Reporter.

2020-06-26

By
Joe Skvarenina

A gentleman called me the other day and wanted additional information on the Swope family. In 1853 Henry Swope served as Greenfield Postmaster. Later on it seems that H.A. Swope was one of five business men to form a stock company to carry out the banking business in the town of Greenfield. On September 4, 1876 the Greenfield Banking Company was the first bank in Hancock County to open its door on the corner of Main Street and State Streets. The others founders were Nelson Bradley, J. Ward walker, Morgan Chandler, and S.T. Dickerson. Nelson Bradley was the first President and J Ward Walker was the first cashier. The Bank was located at the site of the old Masonic Building. In addition Henry was at one time Clerk of the Hancock County Court, a member of the Odd Fellows Lodge, and served in the Home Guard during the Civil War. I do believe that Henry was married to Mary who was one of the founders of the Cosmopolitan Club for women. The ladies would have self-improvement speakers in their homes. If anyone knows more about the Swope's of Greenfield please let me know. He would like to know if they are connected to the Swope's of West Virginia.

Ned Arthur the other day asked me about Chicken Hill and he was surprised when I knew the site. Chicken Hill is located at CR's 400W and 400S in Sugar Creek Township. In the 1920's and 1930's New Palestine residents used to buy their eggs from Mrs. Everson and thus the name of the intersection came into being. I been been told that their was an old mill in the area and now all that is left is the mill run and probably a chicken coop or two.

Did you know that first Hancock County Sheriff was John Foster and he was appointed Sheriff by the Governor in 1828. The county provided the first jail during his term. Samuel Duncan was the second sheriff and he was elected in 1832. He was the sheriff when the first jail burned down. It seems that in 1833 John Hays an ex -sheriff from Rush County became insane and committed battery and wandered into Hancock County. He was arrested by Dunbar and put in the first log jail. According to the record Hays started a fire in his cell and was consumed by it before he could be rescued...During the 1840's there was some concern about the conditions in the next jail. According to some, prisoners were subjected to some poor conditions. The Hancock County jail at the time was found to be too damp and unhealthy so it was closed. It was duirng this time that Hancock County would ship prisoners to Indianapolis for holding. In the early days this was by stagecoach or horseback and later by train...In 1874 the Grange was organizing an independent county ticket which backed the appeal for salary grabs. The Sheriff's salary would be \$1200.00...In 1870 he first white child born in Hancock County, Jared Meek, ran for Sheriff and he was defeated...Robert Brown became Sheriff just in time to look into the murder of Sam Derry. She was killed in a fight with his sister and her husband over the ownership of a small gosling. In 1859 to 1863 the Hancock County Democrat tell us the Sheriff was busy with the problems developing between folks from Virginia, North Carolina, Kentucky and New England over the Civil War issues. There were shouting matches and fighting in the streets and those involved spent night in jail...The Civil War ended and the soldiers were returning home by 1865 and the County Sheriff still had to deal with brawls and unruly behavior by the residents. The Civil War still lingered with local residents...Last, rumor has it that one local family cared

for a Confederate soldier, the husband's brother, in their Greenfield home If discovered the family would have been charged with treason. The Sheriff bought all these small histories and you will need to contact Mike.

Enough. I have told you everything that I know and some things I don't. Talk to me at jskvarenina@hotmail.com or the Daily Reporter.

2020-06-19

By
Joe Skvarenina

The Gooding Tavern, on the southwest corner of State and Main in Greenfield has had various very important visitors like former President Martin Van Buren and Henry Clay. The site is the current location of the Greenfield City Hall. The Gooding Tavern was begun in 1832 by Joseph Chapman and later additions were added by Asa Gooding. It was run for many years by Gooding's wife Matilda. Another, the Guyman New Hotel was built in the 1840's was destroyed by a fire in 1900 and now the site is an empty parking lot beside the Lincoln Pancake House. The second floor balcony on the Guymon House was an excellent space for public speeches. Mary Landis was an earlier tavern keeper in Charlottesville sat at her window and counted ninety prairie schooners going west on the National Road and this property is still there used as a family home. There was an Inn in Cleveland which also served as a restaurant. At one time it was the academy which was run by Roscoe Thomas. It is also currently a home. The long gone Dunbar House on the corner of State and Main was the site of a Civil War argument and knifing. I am sure that there is more.

Have you ever been in the Octagon House in Shirley? You need to go. Did you ever hear about old Billie Goat Hill. Darrell Deck used to tell that the proper location of Billie Goat Hill was the west side of Shirley around the site of the old Shirley Founder and Radiator. According to Deck the reason it was called Billie Goat Hill was because it smelled like rotten eggs at the site. I guess it was some chemical used in the manufacturing of radiators which caused the smell. I am beginning to update the history of Shirley for the Shirley Historical Society 1990 to the present. Do you have anything to tell?

Enough. I have told you everything that I know and some things I don't. Please write me at jskvarenina@hotmail.com or the Daily Reporter.

2020-06-12

By
Joe Skvarenina

More about Elijah Tyner. I have written about him before but I cannot seem to get beyond the basics. He had a store and nursery in Blue River Township. He died on 2/1/1872 but I cannot find an obit. His sale was 3/19/1872 in Morristown and was conducted by James and William Tyner. The sale included horses, cattle, corn in the crib, wheat hay in the mow, wheat growing, two horse wagon and harness, a general assortment of farming implements including reaper, grain drill, mower, wood saw and household furniture. I also know that Tyner designed the first county seal. What do you know?

Tammy Story writes, "I was wondering if you could tell how I can find the history of the house at 404 N State St in Greenfield. I know it's for sale and I fell in love with pictures from the inside. The fact that it is a Civil War home really intrigues me. I love history. I wish I knew what kind of repairs the house needs." Does anyone know about this Civil War house?

Don Freeman also called and said his father was a tomato farmer probably in Brown and Jackson Townships. He tells that there were canning factories also in Carthage, Greenfield, Shirley, and two in Morristown. Tomatoes were an import crop in Hancock County in the early 1930's until the 1970's

For many years the chief industry of Hancock County was agriculture and the small family farm. Myron E. Cromer was the county's first extension agent beginning his work in 1918. At first his office was at the top of the Hancock County Courthouse. Later after its completion the extension office it was moved to the Memorial Building. According to some Cromer introduced the soybean to Hancock County. He was also active in establishing the Hancock County Farm Bureau. The Richman History tells us in 1840 corn was the biggest crop followed by oats and wheat. In 1840s wine were the most important livestock followed by sheep and cattle which were soon tied for second place. Today the farms are larger and the important crops are soy beans and corn followed by a distant wheat. Swine are still important for the county. In the 1920's mechanized farming took hold the farmers became less dependent on horses. Today the farms are much larger.

Enough. I have told you everything that I know and some things I don't. Talk to me at jskvarenina@hotmail.com or write the Daily Reporter.

2020-06-05

By
Joe Skvarenina

A reader writes, "I'm not sure if you are the one to contact about replacing an old style historic marker in Blue River township.

I've tried contacting others but nothing happened. Just drove by the post - yes what is left is leaning at a good angle! I don't know who farms the ground but it wouldn't take much accidental oops to knock the rest of the post over! No idea where the pieces are - wonder if just buried in mud

The schoolhouse across is not in the best shape but I noticed the one at 200 S and Morristown Pike is now pretty much a shell."

The marker you are telling me about was one of several put up by the Hancock County Historical Society during the bicentennial. Another is on Pennsylvania Street at the location of the old Harvest Market. If anyone know about the location of this marker parts let me know. The marker you refer to is about Elijah Tyner.

I have written before about Elijah Tyner but there is more to be told. His store building is still in existence on Morristown Pike in Hancock County. Yes, he was one of the first successful merchants and nurserymen in Hancock County. He was always good in helping his neighbor. He was the second son of Rev. William Tyner a Baptist minister who went from South Carolina to Kentucky in 1802 and eventually to Indiana Territory in 1805 where Brookville now stands. After that family moved to Decatur County. Elijah was married three times with numerous children. Son James was a proprietor of a hotel in Morristown. He died in 1902. I wonder if that hotel was the forerunner of the Copper Kettle?

As a young man Elijah cut a road from Shelbyville to Blue River Township. After he completed his effort he built a log cabin and began clearing timber for one of the first orchards planted in the state. His house was isolated and many travelers passed through the area. After a short time in 1826 he purchased a small stock of dry goods and groceries which he offered for sale at his cabin. This was the first store in Hancock County. Tyner supported the many Union families left behind in Blue River Township during the Civil War. His charitable efforts were well appreciated by the community. He died Feb. 1, 1872. He is buried in the graveyard at Shiloh Christian Church. The land for the church was given by Elijah and his wife Sara who donated the land to the Baptists for the church. The property would revert back to the donors if no church was on the site. This church was later to become nondenominational Christian Church on Jan. 6 1904. The land was deeded to the Christians for a price of \$300 by the Regular Baptists. Tyner lived in Hancock for 1826-1872.

2020-05-29

By
Joe Skvarenina

Greg Murphy writes, "I was searching in newspapers.com this week and found an article entitled "Moulds". These moulds were used by Teal family in making counterfeit half dollars. The article was published in the Reporter on April 24, 1920. William Bundy had purchased a house at the corner of North and School Street that forty years ago belonged to Alfred Teal and his son William Teal. Both were jewelers in Greenfield. Mr. Bundy had hired William Dangier from Eden to do home remodeling. In opening one wall Mr. Dangier found the counterfeit moulds.

William Teal was also in the school desk manufacturing business with George Peterborough. The authorities had posted a person in the school building across the street and James Baldwin had climbed a nearby cherry tree to watch for possible criminal activity. The Teals, father and son, were observed in an upstairs room making the bogus money. The Teals were arrested and sent to jail. Father Alfred died in the slammer. Son William served his time and was released. In the meantime Misters Boyd and Hinchman had taken over the school desk business when the Teals were in jail. Mrs. Teal and the children took the pair to court for patent infringement for \$50,000. Mrs. Teal lost the suit. Alfred Teal had laid out the Teal Addition in Greenfield. What became of the Teal family is not known. By the way Hinchman was a judge.

The Teal's were expert jewelers and they knew that the half dollars had to have a proper ring so they mixed various metals in the mould. Then they would wash the counterfeit coins in silver. It was difficult to determine if the half dollars were counterfeit. The contractor found one of the half dollars in the wall. It was dated 1877 and he kept it as a souvenir. Better check your 50 cents pieces.

Enough I have told you everything that I know and some things I don't. Talk to me at jkvarenina@hotmail.com or write the Daily Reporter.

2020-05-22

By
Joe Skvarenina

Clara Carl of Philadelphia lived in a big old white house along the National Road which currently has a red metal roof. Mrs. Carl was convicted of second degree murder of her husband, Frank B. Carl, on June 3, 1922 in a Shelby County Court. It seems that she was also a suspect in the arsenic poisoning of her first husband and his father when she lived in Kansas. Greenfield lawyers went to Kansas had the bodies exhumed and confirmed the presence of arsenic. In the third year of her imprisonment at Indiana State Women's Prison he escaped. Nine days later the Hancock County Criminal was picked up in Columbus Ohio by detectives.

According to Carl during her escape she suffered many hardships. begging food and rides, traveling mostly at night. On one occasion she missed capture by a matter of inches when bathing her bruised and bleeding feet in a small stream. Peering out of some bushes, she saw two men she recognized as officers searching for her. To quote Mrs. Carl, "her number was not up yet.

The 1930's must have been interesting times in Greenfield. In 1933 one newspaper story tells, "C.W. Moncrief is asking that the chicken thieves not call at their home for a third time...During the last few nights the Moncrief's have lost eighty-seven chickens in three visits...or during the same year Kinder's Restaurant, 103 West Main, offered lunches for 20 cents and dinners for 25 cents. The menu included roast pork, roast beef, meat loaf and chicken dumplings. It was also in 1933 that the emergency farm bill took effect and enabled the Secretary of Agriculture to lease land and take it out of production in order to increase prices, in addition the Drys of Hancock County were called together for a mass meeting in the Memorial Building by Ernst Warrum of Green Township, Chairman of the movement. They were in favor of retaining the 18th Amendment and were interested in having Hancock County candidates on the state ticket. Also State Route Nine from Greenfield to Shelbyville was paved for the first time. Last in 1933 Daisy Barr of Indianapolis, former Friends minister in Greenfield reported the theft of a \$2000 diamond ring to city police. Barr was the head of the women's division of the KKK."

Enough. I have told you everything that I know and some things I don't. Talk to me at jskvarenina@hotmail.com or write the Daily Reporter.

2020-05-15

By
Joe Skvarenina

Today one cannot help recognizing the many valiant nurses that served our community home and aboard. One was Nellie Baldwin who volunteered for service in WW I as a Red Cross nurse on the front lines of Europe later to return to Greenfield to teach Latin. Linda Comestock Teal brings to our attention Rebecca Katherine Caraway another WWI nurse from Sugar Creek Township who was born in 1870. Her father was a school teacher and they lived on a farm in the Philadelphia area. Ms. Caraway was a member of the Army Nurse Corp. Before she joined the Nurse Corp she worked for the Boston Floating Hospital. She died in 1964 at the age of 93 probably one of the older veterans from those days. She received a full military funeral. Linda says they called her Aunt Kate.

President Woodrow Wilson declared war on April 6, 1917. It was obvious that the Germans had a disregard for the rights of neutrals especially through the contracted period of submarine warfare. The people of Hancock County knew that war was inevitable. In an April 5 editorial in the Hancock County Democrat John Mitchell tells, "the age of cruel despotism and hardhearted oppression is passed away with leaders such as Woodrow Wilson..." According to Mitchell, "Flags were displayed everywhere."

One patriot John Sedden of Greenfield, who had been honorable discharged after some thirty years of service in the US Army, in which he served in all parts of the world, entered the service again as a recruiting officer at Peoria and later Decatur Illinois. On April 5 a large consignment of flags was sold out of all stores in Greenfield.

The following Hancock men lost their lives in WWI: Teddy C. Brewer, William Walter Vandine, James D. Braggs, George W. Hite, Claude Matthews Parish, Ben H. Davis, Orla Russell Simmons, Earl Grigsby, Evans Reynold Sexson, Clark Richard Hill, John M. Jessup, William Leo Miller, Orville Howard Cook, John Francis McMahan, Raymond L. Wagoner, James Monroe Jack, and Gladstone Bertram Newhouse.

Enough. I have told you everything that i know and some things I don't. Talk to me at jskvarenina@hotmail.com or write the Daily Reporter.

2020-05-08

Strange Boulder

By
Joe Skvarenina

This story was told to me by Tom Van Duyn and I share it with you here.

The story starts in 1925 when Jackson Township had big improved gravel roads. The farmers used tractors and horses to do the farm work. Life was at a slower pace but work was harder then ever to do. The whole family participated in wheat and oat thrashing companies either in the field or in the kitchen preparing generous harvest dinners. Farm wives would always attempt to out perform their neighbors in setting a generous harvest dinner table.

The story takes place on 250 North, the farm of Noble and Cora Catt. To the west of this farm over a prominent hill resided the Williams family. Both families had teenage sons, Dale Williams and Herbert Powell Catt. The boys did there farm work and played as boys did at the time. The hill between the two homesteads was heavily forested. On the south side of the top of the hill lay a huge rock, moved by the glaciers many years ago, weighing many tons. The boys had a third companion who was known as a trickster. These boys would get together in the woods as time would permit On one summer morning Dale went across the hill to visit his two friends as he neared the top of the hill he thought he heard a voice for the vicinity of the rock saying, "roll me over". Dale hurried the Catt farm to tell what he heard. The boys decided to dig under the rock to see what they could find stopping for dinner at the Catt home as was the custom when working together. After dinner they went back to work. Later in the afternoon they were able to roll the huge rock over but found nothing beneath it to their disappointment. The boys went back to the Catt farm as it was getting dark Herb's other friend left for home. Later Dale also made his way home. When Dale reached the rock it was twilight and he heard a voice say "roll me back, roll me back". Dale didn't waste time to find the source of the voice and his feet fled the area. As told to me by my grandmother Catt.

Thanks Tom. This be a good old time story to tell around the campfire. Enough. I have told you everything that I know and some things I don't. Talk to me at jksvarenina@hotmail.com or the Daily Reporter.

2020-05-02

Kent State

By Joseph Skvarenina

What do you remember about college? My memories include a whiff of tear gas and the Crosby, Still and Nash recording "Four Dead in Ohio", being sent home to complete the spring quarter by correspondence and the Ohio National Guard arriving at Kent State to contain a Vietnam protest. Yes I went to Kent State University and this May 4 marks the 50 anniversary of the Kent State demonstrations and shootings and a protracted period of protest throughout the nation. I never expected my college days would include such memories. In 1969 I attended the Stark Regional Campus of Kent State and was Vice President of the Student Body. In transferring to the central campus I stayed involved with student government and landed a work study position with the University's Community Relations office. I was sort of in the thick of things. To top it off I had lived in Johnson overlooking the commons area and I was volunteer for the center of campus unrest. My senior year I accepted a position with the Committee to Re-Elect the President.

For this campus it all began on April 30th when President Nixon announced he was sending United States Troops into Cambodia to cut the Viet Cong supply line through that small Southeast Asia country. On May 1 a weekend of student protests began with a copy of the United States Constitution being buried on the commons at noon. Five hundred students showed up. At 3:00 the same day the Black United Students held a protest over the Oakland Police being allowed to recruit on campus 18 months earlier. This rally called for the firing or killing of all racists, deans, professors, coaches and university presidents. Only 47 blacks appeared at this event. Later on Friday night at 11:15 on Water Street, a concentrated bars, the protests continued. It was hot and humid evening and people left the establishments and congregated on Water Street. As the crowd grew larger they began to shout and dance yelling 1 2 3 4 we don' want you f-----g war. It progressed further when three cars were pushed into the center of the street and set on fire. At that point the crowd began throwing rocks at downtown shop windows. The Kent City Police and the Portage County Sheriff drove the students back with tear gas. Mayor of Kent closed the bars and a curfew was declared in community. The riot continued until 2:00 am. The next day May 3 the students were confined to campus. At 8:00 pm the protest continued when the ROTC (Reserve Officer Training Corp) Building was torched by protestors and destroyed. At this point tear gas was fired into the crowd and the National Guard appeared for the first time on Campus to restore order.

Now the Ohio National Guard like other National Guards is a citizen army meant to defend our country and goes back to the days of Lexington and Concord. The Ohio National Guard served with distinction in the War of 1812, the Mexican American War, the Civil War, WW I and WW II throughout the South Pacific. Fifty years ago that same guard got into a life and death struggle on May 4 with antiwar demonstrators which ended with the death of four students on the Kent campus with the university being closed for the remaining of the school year.

Now just this year I read "Kent State" by James Michner and found it somewhat fictional. Rumors about that day abound. Some say it was radicals Weatherman or outsiders who caused the violence. Others tell that local and Ohio politicians were attempting to make a name for themselves. Other still others say the Ohio Guard wasn't properly trained. Some blame Nixon. But who knows. Maybe like other historical events it is too complex to be written about by the participants. More time needs to be passed for objectivity. I later gave testimony to the Ohio Legislative Committee on Campus unrest and served on the University's Commission for nonviolence.

When I went home to the farm my father told me they should have "shot" them all and he wouldn't attend commencement that spring. He was a construction worker. The conversation probably happened in many families. I went on to get my M.Ed. from Kent and Dad attended commencement. I got a fine education and I don't regret attending KSU. Kent State and other universities, the Ohio National Guard and Vietnam were all probably destined to collide. Only time and space will sort it out. Let history decide.

2020-05-01

Milners Corner

By
Joe Skvarenina

Tom Van Duyn shares with us this information on Milners Corner. A town which is no longer in Green Township. It has disappeared.

Milners Corner was located at the intersection of County Road 900 and 600 East. Green Township and Brown Township are separated by 600 East. The location is two miles south of Madison County. It is listed on county maps but the town has never been platted. The town was named for James Milner in 1850. From its founding until 1920 it was a vibrant business community.

The first store at the site was operated by David McKinsey, a former school teacher. Later store owners included Joe Dawson, Henry Milner, Nimrod Davis, Joseph DeCamp, Cadwell and Keller, William and Joseph Hills, S.A. Troy, Tague and Brother, W. Vanzant, and Charles Troy. The first Post Office was operated in 1868. The first post master was Nimrod Davis and the next was Charles Troy. The post office was discontinued in 1903 when rural delivery began. There were numerous physicians in town including D.H. Myers, S.A. Troy, Fout and Delph, George Williams, Charles Pratt and Jas. VanDuyn. Blacksmiths in town were VanDike and Manning. Carpenters were Josiah Long and Joel Manning. There was also two steam power saw mills operated at different times. One was operated by L. Tucker with four employees and had a potential of 5,000 feet a day.

Early settlers came through the Knightstown Pendleton State Road which was later named the Nashville Pike when modified in Madison County. It later became a toll road with toll booths at strategic locations.

Hugh and Shirley Elsbury currently own the property at Milners Corner. The red barn on the NW Corner of 900N was built in the 1840's. Some of the beams in the barn were marked with the date 07-1849 and signed by Henry Milner in red paint. The barn has had a section added to the original structure. Some of the cross beams in the barn are hewed from standing timber. These beams are marked from timber working tools of the time period. There are also racks to hang harnesses and collars from the beams. The barn is now protected with sheet metal covering and concrete pillars. Across the road support 600E there is a well maintained block structure. Back in the 1940's and 1950's a cabinet shop operated at the site by Ray Smith and others.

Towns like Milners Corner were the backbone of our community when the roads were dirt and rutted. Small communities thrived but with better road and cars things changed. Tom is the unofficial Mayor of Milners Corner. Thanks, Tom.

Enough I have told you everything that I know and some things I don't. Talk to me at jskvarenina@hotmail.com or the Daily Reporter.



2020-04-24

By Joseph Skvarenina

Brenda Madison writes, "Indiana has a Greene County (named for Revolutionary War General Nathanael Greene) and at least 9 communities whose names begin with, "Green". One of those communities was named for the township in which it is located, another for the river on which it sits, and one for a nearby cemetery. Others got their names because the founder had some association with another town or city of the same name back east. One was possibly named for the person who platted the land. But I can find no information about how Greenfield got its name."

Brenda, there isn't any. There is no particular reason we are called Greenfield. Over the years I have searched to no avail. There is no Mr. Green. I think it was because it was in the middle of the county in a green field. In the early days the first name of our little spot on the map was Brandywine for the purpose of getting mail and it was registered as such on May 1, 1828. Later when the county was founded, it took the name of Hancock like the county. It remained as such from 1828 until March, 1833. There was another town known as Greenfield near Indianapolis and that town changed their name to Greenwood. We officially became Greenfield April 4, 1833. But at times in the good old days the post office would have a different name than the town. Carrolton is another town in Hancock County which had various names.

Another story which circulates tells that County Commissioners Samuel Vangilder, Elisha Chapman, Hunter on May 3, 1828 ordered that the seat of justice in Hancock County be designated by the name and title of Greenfield. Does anyone know for sure?

Enough. I have told you everything that I know and some things I don't. Talk to me at jskvarenina@hotmail.com or the Daily Reporter.

2020-04-17

By
Joe Skvarenina

Maurice Thompson, the state geologist, talks about the National Road (Route 40) in Hancock county in a 1886 report. Thompson tells that the National Road was opened in Indiana between 1828-29 by clearing the timber ninety feet in width bridging Brandywine and Sugar Creek at the crossing of these two streams. The abutments for the bridging was build from boulders from surrounding fields and were worked into substantial masonry. In 1886 these bridges were still in service. The National Road at the time was designed to be the first national thoroughfare connecting the Mississippi River at St. Louis and the intermediate cities with the seaboard at Baltimore. The grand designed was later spoiled by the railroads that took over. Four rail lines traversed the county. This included the Chicago, St. Louis and Pittsburgh, the Indiana, Bloomington. Greenfield & Western, Cincinnati, Hamilton and Dayton and the Bee Line. No part of Hancock County was more than four miles from a railroad. Thompson tells us that the county seat Greenfield was centrally located between the east and west lines of the county. Also no other county in the state had better gravel roads. Also some of the original virgin forest was still standing at the time. Farmers were ditching their fields from the surface streams and developing their farms more at this point.

Thompson also tells about Mound building activities in the county. Some activity was found in Center Township on the farm of H. F. Braddock at south side of the Brandywine. A clay ridges some 10 feet above the creek bottom has been constructed in the ancient bed of the stream. The excavation which furnished the earth for this embankment is distinctly seen in the high ground where three pits exist. These pits are obviously artificial and ancient. By what ancient people and for what purpose these ancient works were built. who knows.

Enough. I have told you everything that I know and some things I don't talk t me at Jksvarenina@hotmail.com or the Daily Reporter.

2020-04-10

Drive ins

By Joe Skvarenina

Marlena Linne writes, "A friend of mine remembers going to a drive-in restaurant called the Daisy Mae. It's the little concrete block building on the north side of Highway 40 and just east of Mt Comfort Road. Do you know if there are any pictures of it and, if so, would it be possible to get a copy of it?" Do any of you have any photos? Drive Ins and Motels along 40 were once thing after WWII.

Before the advent of the Interstate 70 the National Road was the best way to go motoring west. After WW II the large amount of auto travelers created the need for drive ins and especially motels with the comfort and convenience of home and some even had the new form of entertainment called television. Between 1945 and 1951 there were 500 motels in the state of Indiana. Today there are only a few motels left traveling east from Indianapolis to the state border. Most have been converted to apartments or weekly rentals. The Hoosier Lodge was 10 miles east of Indianapolis on the National Road and the building still stands today. A car lot is partially on the site. The Hoosier Poet is east off Greenfield was turned into residential apartment and it is still there. The Motel Weston is one of the older motels still used for that purpose and still attracts visitors. Crider's Drive Inn in Greenfield is now the doughnut shop was a very popular drive-in spot for teenage cruisers. Do you know of others? The word motel was invented during that time to fit the car craze as the motor hotel.

Enough. I have told you everything that I know and some things I don't. Talk to me at jskvarenina@hotmail.com or the Daily Reporter.

**See page 42 of the Postcard History for a picture of the Hoosier Poet Hotel

2020-04-03

By Joe Skvarenina

Do you remember the old Riley School? It burned down April 30, 1985. The arch at the front of the Greenfield Central School offices is all that remains of the Riley School. It was at West North and Pennsylvania Streets, the Romanesque Revival structure was built in 1895 as Greenfield High School. Constructed out of rough-cut blocks of stone, the structure was ponderous with massive towers and arcade entry porch. The school served the community as the first library and an elementary school before it burned. Around 1925 a bid from a Greensburg firm indicated the cost of a proposed new Greenfield High School would not be less than \$117,854. The building was placed on the same location of the West Building or Washington School. At the close of basketball season in 1926, the Greenfield Holding Company was formed to promote the erection of an adequate gymnasium for the high school and the community. This building was also known as Lincoln Park which was an elementary school and today I do believe it is the Lincoln Square apartments. In 1905 Greenfield had five schools. High School was held for a brief period of time at the Old West Building. Lincoln and Longfellow had four teachers and Washington had six. The high school had 17 instructors. East Greenfield was a one room school house. By the way, the Old Lincoln School was located on the corner of Pennsylvania and Pierson Streets. It was opened in 1890 at a cost of \$5,946 and was closed in 1934. Later when the Boys Club was formed, it was used as a clubhouse. It was remodeled and reopened as a school in 1948. It was closed again May 29, 1969. Today there are apartments at the site and I have been told that some of the bricks were used in the construction of the apartments. On August 23, 1843, Cornell Meek entered into a contract to construct a county seminary building. It was uncertain when the first school was taught. But the second term began September 24, 1848. This building would have been located in front of the old Ranch Market probably in the middle of Pennsylvania Street. There is a marker at the site.

Enough. I have told you everything that I know and some things I don't. Talk to me at jskvarenina@hotmail.com or the Daily Reporter.

2020-03-27

By Joe Skvarenina

Mr. William Trail and escape slave was one of the early settlers in Shirley. Mr. Trail and Jesse Johnson owned a farm on the west side of town. Before the Panhandle Railroad was built through Knightstown in 1853 he took loads of wheat to Cincinnati. It took him 5 to 7 days to make the journey. He great granddaughters, Artemia and Chotile taught school in Washington D.C. They were both born on the farm. Chlotile received her graduate education from Columbia University. She was well known educator. Now here is the rest of the story. William Trail in 1814 fled from James Blakley's Plantation in South Carolina to Indiana Territory. Hired slave catcher James Cleveland pursued Trail into Connersville Indiana where he resided as a free man. Cleveland had entered into an agreement with Trail's former owner Blakely to catch Trail after an earlier agreement to emancipate had not been fulfilled. Eventually Trail entered into another agreement with his owner to purchase his own freedom for the sum of \$300. He paid the debt and a " Deed of Emancipation" was filed with the County Recorder. William Cunningham was engaged to collect the \$300 but never turned over the funds over to Trail's owner. But since the Deed of Emancipation had been filed the question of Trail's freedom had been settled and subsequent attempts were stopped. Trail then purchased twenty five acres in the Connersville area and became an active member of the community. In 1832 William Trail sued Rev, James Smith for slander and won a \$25 judgment. Trail was accused of burning down Smith's barn. After the winning the judgment Trail sold his farm and moved to Henry County. Trail was committed to freedom and his own dignity. Four of Trail's son's served in the Union Army during the Civil War. Two of his brothers died in the conflict. His youngest son Benjamin died at the Battle of Crater. The family established a school in Trails Grove near Shirley. After the Civil War William Jr. became a prosperous farmer and developed Trails Grove community. He is probably the one known as the founder of Shirley. There is a Trail Grove Cemetery on the Henry County side of Shirley. I would imagine it is an African American site. Thank you to Georgia Cravey who shared her information on William Trail with me. The Winter Issue 2013 of Traces will tell you more.

Enough. I have told you everything that I know and some things I don't. Talk to me at Jksvarenina@hotmail.com or the Daily Reporter.

2020-03-20

By Joe Skvarenina

Have you ever heard Le Blazer Studio Club? The founder was Lee Blazer. He was born in 1896 in Alert Indiana. He received his training at the Columbia College of Speech and Drama. He came to Greenfield in 1932 gave music lessons and eventually he became the Director of Music at the Christian Church. His Greenfield Christian Church Choirs gave vocal concerts on the Courthouse steps on Friday nights in the 1930's. Later he started his studio club with the goal of bringing artists to Greenfield to round out his piano and voice students cultural growth. He called these guest appearances Matinee Musicals. His Studio Club performed "Messiah" at Bradley Methodist Church along with those visiting artists. Later his Studio Club toured at the Murat Temple, Starlight Musicals and Cincinnati. The Studio Club was located at 610 North East Street in Greenfield where Mr. Blazer taught piano and voice lessons in a room with a big picture window. Blazer made Greenfield the scene of some very special events. The people he brought to town were of the greatest artistic accomplishment of the time. Pianists such as Menahem Pressler, Belia Doszormeny Nage, Sidney Foster, Anna Kaskas and other musicians such as the Berkshire Quartet and the duo of Margaret White on the harp and Harry Houdeshel on the flute plus others were brought to the community Mr. Blazer made Greenfield the scene of some of the greatest cultural events of the century. Because of Lee Blazer Greenfield students came to know Brahms, Mozart, Bach, Rachmaninoff, Rimsky-Korsakoff and others. So what of all this activity, children of the mid century also received life long discipline. According to some, note would be written on the music like "Mother help. This boy needs practice." The Le Blazer Studio Club which began in 1938 closed in 1963. Blazer died in 1981.

Enough. I have told you everything that I know and some things I don't Talk to me at jksvarenina@hotmail.com or the Daily Reporter.

2020-03-13

By Joe Skvarenina

What do you know about pioneer superstitions in Hancock county which probably were the same all over the state. Indiana was admitted to the Union in 1816 but it was still raw frontier. These observations were originally recorded by Rev. Edward Muir a Methodist minister in Spencer Indiana. According to Muir, "To the pioneer in Lincoln's day the carrying of an edged tool, such as a hoe or ax, through the hose was an omen of bad luck, foretelling the death of a family member within that period... The plaintiff howling of a dog meant that morrow would tell of death some where. The crossing of the hunters path by a dog meant bad luck unless the hunter locked his little finger until the dog was out of sight; or better still if he returned to the point of starting and began his journey anew, all ill fortune of bad luck occasioned by the bad start would be reckoned against him...Friday was a bad day in the calendar to be avoided anything new such as plowing, sowing or reaping in the fields, or making of a garment unless the labor could be completed during the day. A bird alighting on the widow or coming into the house was a sure sign of sorrow. All planting, sowing, fencing and preparation for the same was to be governed by certain signs of the moon. Plants such as potatoes, maturing beneath the surface of the soil must be planted in the dark of the moon. And in like manner tomatoes and beans must be planted during the light of the moon. "Do you know of any others?

My grandmother hung garlic by the back door. My dad always carried buckeye's in his pocket? We always planted our peas by moonlight.

One last thing, one of the Indiana's least explored areas of antebellum history is that of the state's financial institutions and their currency issues. Prior to the Civil War a wide range of firms include two state banks, a private multi-branch state wide bank, state chartered and unregulated banks as well as insurance companies, railroads and others issued bank notes of varying reliability. In fact there were 455 issuers of 2800 bank notes and scrip. A new book by Wendell Wolka "A History of Indiana Obsolete Bank Notes and Scrip" is now available. Contact purduenut@aol.com for further details.

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2020-03-06

By Joe Skvarenina

A new group is being formed in town to hopefully celebrate the 150th birthday of American landscape artist Will Vawter. Vawter is buried in the Greenfield at Park Cemetery. The group is commissioning a bronze statue to be completed by Bill Wolfe, a celebrated Hoosier artist and painter who has been commissioned to create many works across the country. The sculpture will capture Vawter at his easel, working plien air style. The canvass will be open giving the illusion Vawter is painting those who sit on a bench as his subjects. It will be a prefect interactive statute that will offer memories for families.

Vawter moved to Greenfield when he was six years old and developed a close working relationship with James Whitcomb Riley. He illustrated eleven of Riley's books. His works were exhibited at the Brown County Art Colony and he won awards in 1925, 1926, 1928, 1930, 1932 and 1935. He was a founding member of the Brown County Art Gallery Association. He passed away in Nashville on February 11, 1941. His house is immediately behind the Memorial Building, east side, second North of the alley. If you have questions about this effort or would like to make a donation contact David Spencer at 317-460-2133.

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2020-02-28

By Joe Skvarenina

Greg Arnold writes, "It was nice meeting you at Walgreens. I purchased one of your Civil War Era books. Can you help with any information on the history of the property at 5573 W. 100 South? My friends purchased the home. Jim and Susan Cherry were the previous owners. In a grove of trees that is next to the house there are the remains of a foundation that was probably a very large barn. I don't know what kind of local resources are available to search for any information or photos of the barn or house that stood on that property?"

Jim Cherry tells, "Where we built the house at 5573E 100S belonged to the Binford family. It is the same family that lived down near Binford Road. I did have a picture of the barn and house that sit there back I would guess 1900 to 1940. Paul Cooper is a descendant that lives down on 300S, he is married to Linda who use to work in the Court House. I believe he has the picture now and I think the Binfords that lived there was his Great Great Grandparents."

The Binford's were a prominent family in Hancock County. John Binford was an educator, lawyer, financier and lived in Hancock County most of his life. Mr. Binford wrote the first history of Hancock County. It covered the period from 1818 to 1882. He eventually served as Superintendent of Hancock County Schools. His beginning teacher's salary was \$75 for a three month term. He became an attorney in the law offices of New & Barrett. He had also taught law for a year. He was a financier too. Other Binford's in the community included Benjamin Binford DDS, Nathan Binford, and Paul Binford. Tom Binford who ran INB and served as the 500 steward was related to these folks.

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2020-02-21

By Joe Skvarenina

East Greenfield area was once called Oklahoma. Oklahoma was located east of the Brandywine Creek. In 1908 local teacher Ada New asked for a new schoolhouse the school board would not consent at first. Mrs. New was persistent, and a plain frame building was soon erected. It was called the Ada New School. Many local pastors also preached in the school on a Sunday afternoon. In 1915 there were thirty-two one room school houses in the county. In 1947 East Greenfield School was abandoned as the last one room school house. After the decline of students in the East Greenfield School students were transferred to Riley School.

A change in the way people thought about public education caused much building activity. Many new schools were constructed in the period of 1900 to 1940 including a grade school in Brandywine Township in 1923, a school in Shirley in 1905 and Wilkinson in 1908 both in Brown Township. The Mt. Comfort School in Buck Creek Township was constructed in 1917 and the Eden School in 1922 by the Hancock Central School District. The Charlottesville School was constructed by the Jackson Blue River combined townships. The New Palestine School was constructed in 1919 by Sugar Creek Township. The Fortville School was built in 1938 and the McCordsville School in 1926 by Vernon Township. I wonder how many of these buildings are around today?

Today the graded schools are of course dominate. Educators claim in part because the public became aware of the fact the one room school house education was deficient? The new intelligence testing during WWI help make the areas determination. Is it true?

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2020-02-14

By Joe Skvarenina

The Indiana Historical Bureau places historical signs throughout the Indiana communities commemorating our state's history. Soon we will have a third one in Hancock County on Will Vawter. The other two are on the Democrat rooster on 40 by Riley Park and the other on James Whitcomb Riley by the Riley home. It is yet to decide where to place the new marker. What do you know about Vawter.

Will Vawter captured the character of rural Hoosiers and the beauty of the Indiana landscape in his art. Born in 1871, he lived in Greenfield by 1880, and worked as an illustrator for local newspapers by 1891. Vawter illustrated works by many Indiana writers including Greenfield-based authors like his sister Clara Vawter and "Hoosier Poet" James Whitcomb Riley.

Vawter moved to Brown County in 1909, joining the vibrant art community, and created bold oil paintings of the regional landscape. He exhibited regularly at H. Lieber Co. in Indianapolis and at the Hoosier Salon in Chicago. In 1926, he helped organize the Brown County Art Gallery Association, dedicated to local art. Vawter died in 1941 and is buried in Greenfield.

It is believed that Vawter's Greenfield studio was located on the third floor of the Thayer building just a block from his home behind the Memorial Building. On the wall he painted his name and date.

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2020-02-07

By Joe Skvarenina

The Gooding Tavern was located at the corner of State and Main Streets on the site of City Hall. In the 1920's the Tavern was demolished. The Gooding Tavern had many famous visitors including former President Martin Van Buren and Henry Clay. Joseph Chapman began the structure in 1832 with later additions being added by Asa Gooding. For many years Gooding's wife Matilda ran the early hotel. To the right of the hotel was a depot for the Indianapolis, Greenfield Traction Lines. Other famous Gooding's include David Gooding who was appointed as the United States Marshall for the District of Columbia from 1866 to 1869. he was wounded in Morgan's raid in Indiana. Another family member was Civil War General Paul Gooding who distinguished himself in the 1864 Red River campaign. It is interesting to note that George Knox leader of Greenfield African American community had a barber shop in the Gooding. Knox, a lifelong friend of James Whitcomb Riley moved to Indianapolis and had a barbershop in the Bates Hotel and published an early Negro (aka black) newspaper called the "Freeman." The Bates House was located at the current site of the Embassy Suites.

Ron and Carol Stamps shares with is information about giant concrete arrows which were placed coast to coast by act of Congress on August 20, 1920 for the air mail service. it seems that navigation charts were poor so every 10 miles they would plant a concert arrow which would be bright yellow. They would be placed on a five-foot tower and lit by a million candle power. Some of these arrows still exist in Northern Indiana. II know we had navigation light towers in the area also one would have been in Cumberland and the other by Kingdom Hall going into Knightstown. The Log Jail Museum has a photo of Lindbergh flying over Greenfield.

Enough. I have told you everything that I know and somethings I don't. Talk to me at jskvarenina@mail.com or the Daily Reporter

2020-01-31

By Joe Skvarenina

Cindi Atwell writes "I read your article about the Ross Reeves Octagon house and I remember seeing it when it was still out in the country before being moved. I moved outside of Wilkinson in 1979 and I met the original owner Hobart O'Kelly who told me some much history of the area. He was selling a book for some ladies in his church and I bought one because I was fascinated by the history. The title is Brown Township Through the years 1830-1976, written by Ethel and Victoria Harlan and 3 others. It is a fascinating account of all the small towns in this area. It was published by Brown Township Bi-Centennial Committee and printed by T.C. Graphics in Knightstown. I still have it because it's a great piece of history.

You also did a piece on cemeteries some time ago and I wanted to respond (old age makes me very slow to get things done) but I grew up in Fortville and there is a very old cemetery in the woods by Lick Creek just to the left of Gravel Lawn Cemetery. I would never know this was there but I rode my horse through the creek and there were Indian mounds and very old markers for military. I would be surprised if there is anything but a few markers left as that was in the early 60's but the markers were from the 1800's. And yes, we do have quicksand in Indiana because my horse and I got into that and you don't forget that!"

Thanks Cindi. Is it possible that the cemetery it is located just inside Madison County? I couldn't find anything on it.

I know that at one time there were Native American mounds in Hancock County and there is still some today. Early settlers in some cases would plow them under. I believe that the Hopewell and Adena cultures were the prime mound builders in Indiana and Ohio. Generally, four periods and traditions are recognized in prehistory or before the settlers. These periods include Paleo Indians, Archaic, Woodland and Late prehistoric periods The Woodland or Adena's existed from 1000 BC to 100 AD. For survival they depended on hunting, gathering, fishing and collecting. Eventually horticulture became a source of food with the three sisters of Native American agriculture maize (corn) beans and squash. Adena became representative or early Woodland tradition. These peoples build mounds for burial and maybe even territorial markers. Adena mounds were placed in upland locations. Adena mortuary rituals would include placing quantities of grave goods in the mounds. Examples would include chert blades, pipes, copper jewelry, worked bone shells and other items. Some mounds were effigy or zoomorphic. Some mounds represented snakes and were called snake mounds. I do believe that there is one of these in Hancock County. One caution it is illegal to disturb Indian Mounds.

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2020-01-24

By Joe Skvarenina

Everyone likes a mystery. Hancock County has had its share. The other day I visited Green Township and got a first class tour of the township sites from Tom Alexander and his wife. Tom's mother was a Troy. On June 8, 1878. Widow Sarah Jane Wilson and her niece Annarette were found dead by the neighbors and Mrs. Wilson's sister in the living room of Wilson house. They both died of strangulation by a left handed murderer. Steve Bales, the brother in law of the deceased was the prime suspect in the crime. He was left handed and voiced concerned that Sarah Jane was going to disinherit her sister and Bale's wife for the niece. So Bales had a motive and probably opportunity. Citizens in Milford Corners were up in arms and were ready to lynch Bales. Bales was acquitted in court for a lack of evidence. The crime was never solved. The victims were laid to rest in the Cook Cemetery in Hancock County on 400 East. The house is still there and Mr. and Mrs. Robert Troy moved into the property in 1917 and lived there for 60 years. Tom now owns the home and the house has been moved from the original site. According to Troy family there is no place like home.

Also from Green Township was John T. Wilson. Mr. Wilson was the head of the Hancock County Farm Bureau during FDR presidency and first principal of Eden High School when the first class graduate in 1901. He was heavily involved in bringing electricity to the farm. He oft said, "The only monument I ever need is to drive through Hancock County and see all the farms lighted with electrify." His dream has come to true.

Eden was first called Lewisburg but the name had to be changed because of duplicate post office in another locality. Green Township was organized in 1832 and was named after John Green. The town of Milner's Corners was a thriving town on the eastern corner which is gone. Charleston was laid out north of Cook Cemetery but never was developed.

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2020-01-17

By Joseph Skvarenina

Have you ever been to jail...wait you don't have to answer. But I did get your attention. Hancock County has had five jails. The first jail was built 1829 just south of Gooding's Corner, the current City Hall. The cost of construction was \$140.50. It was built of wood and burned down in 1833 by inmate John Hays who was former Sheriff in Rush County. He was attempting to escape and he was killed in the fire. The second jail also of wood was built by Cornwall Meek in 1836 at a cost of \$2,200. This structure was located on the south edge of the Courthouse Plaza. The third jail was built on the site of the second in 1853. It was built of logs and currently resides in Riley Park as the Hancock County Historical Society Museum. Before it was moved to Riley Park it was relocated to the site of the Greenfield Gas Company from the south edge of the Courthouse Plaza. the logs of this jail had nails or spikes driven into the wall to prevent escape. The fourth jail is the current prosecutor's office and it was built in 1871. The style of architecture is Second French Empire and the construction cost \$45,000. This building had a eleven cells and was approved for a capacity of twenty. The fifth jail, the present one was built in 1988 under the administration of Sheriff Gulling. The cost was \$6.5 million. It has a capacity of 125 with 63 cells. The sixth jail is now being built on the county farm.

If you go out east 40 between 400 and 50 east on the north side of the road you can see the new jail location. Just to the east of the site is a grove of trees and this is the Pauper Cemetery for the old poor farm. This was used as burying ground for the poor farm residents, no grave stones, just sunken areas. William Kemmer who was lynched was buried at the site. Some say with the rope still is around his neck. In 1887 the Poor Farm was on the North side of the Highway. In 1890 or maybe 1900 a two story brick building was built on the south side. This is the one which most of us remember.

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2020-01-10

By Joe Skvarenina

Hancock County has had a long and glorious connection with the Red Cross and other charitable causes especially during WW I. It seemed that the war to end all war awaken patriotism in our community. The Baldwin sisters were unique in Hancock County History. They were the brain trust of Greenfield. Vernie promoted the Library and literary circles in Greenfield. Margaret was the first women to be a principle of a school in the county's history. Nellie was adventurer she served in the Red Cross in Paris on the front lines during WW I. After the war she returned to Greenfield to be a Latin teacher. Tom Black, brother to artist Richard Black, served with the Romanian Red Cross.

The Red Cross was organized in each township of the county with chairpersons and officers. There was a wide spread membership of county women who made surgical dressings and later sweaters socks and underwear and men's nightshirts and women's house gowns which were for use in hospitals as wounded made their way back from the front. Dr Joseph Allen was chairman of the Red Cross during this time period. Mrs. John F. Mitchell (Minnie Belle) and Mrs. Allen Copper were Hancock County Red Cross Secretaries. There was a Hancock County Council of Defense so activities like the Red Cross and others were weekly events in support of the War effort. On Sept 21, 1917 there was a parade of women and children to support the war effort. Col Edwin P. Thayer who served as lieutenant colonel during the Spanish American War tendered his services to the government. John Sedden of Greenfield who had been honorable discharged after 30 years of service in the US Army in all parts of the World signed up as a recruitment officer.

Flags were displayed everywhere in Greenfield. People decorated their homes, businesses, and streets and merchants couldn't keep up with the demand. On April 4, 1917 when WW I was declared the stores were all sold out. It has been 100 years since WWI and it is time to remember those folks who gave their lives during that time. More study should be devoted to WW I.

Enough. I have told you everything that I know and some things I don't. Talk to me jskavrenina@hotmail.com or the Daily Reporter.

2020-01-03

By Joe Skvarenina

In his autobiography George Knox looks back at life in early Greenfield. Knox became a successful barber in the Gooding Tavern Building, now the Greenfield City Hall. Knox was a civil war veteran, a former slave and later an influential black newspaper editor. Knox was born in Tennessee. In 1863 he crossed to the Union lines to become a mule driver and eventually he worked his way up to published of the Recorder newspaper. In 1865 he opened his barber shop. He made friends with Riley who painted the shaving mugs in his shop. Knox described Greenfield as a place where "prejudice was very high". But still Knox and his fellow black citizens made a fulfilling lives for themselves in Greenfield in spite of it. They established such organizations such as a literary club, debate society, a church, and a school. They also held camp meetings at Boyd's Grove, now the hospital property, for both races. In the decades following the Civil War race relations came to a head in Hancock County when groups of African Americans attempted move into the county. Barn were burned and livestock killed and warnings posted. In 1875 a lynching occurred. A group of vigilantes from three counties removed a prisoner, a black man accused for raping a white woman, from the Hancock County jail, now the prosecutor's office. They hung him at the site of fairgrounds. At that time the fairgrounds were on Morristown Pike and 100 South. Knox remained in Hancock County until 1884. When he moved he started a series of barbershop in Indianapolis with one being at the old Bates Hotel on the circle. He came very wealthy and then established the Indianapolis Recorder which was an African American newspaper. Knox died in the 1920's during the height of the Klu Klux Klan period. When Knox came to Greenfield there were approximately 400 people in town. In 1870 31 were African Americans. The black church in Greenfield was at the site of Dave's Meat Market. Mr. Irving Hunt another black resident of Hancock County lived in small cabin at the site of the well house in Riley Park The spring is called Irving Spring because of it. Mr. Hunt was a friend of Mr Riley's. I do believe that Riley wrote a poem about Mr. Hunt.

Enough. I have told you everything that I know and some things I don't. Talk to me at jkskarenina@hotmail.com or the Daily Reporter.

2019-12-27

By Joseph Skvarenina

Carol Cochard Pool writes "My mother, Mary Sanford Cochard log cabin is now at Conner Prairie. I helped disassemble it as a kid. I believe my Mom's cousin reassembled it...Mr. Fuqua of Fortville, then donated it to Connor Prairie probably in the 90s. Conner Prairie uses it for storage. Unfortunately, folks aren't allowed to walk through. It was first located at her childhood home at 600N. and 200 W. Where she was born on the kitchen table, married in the front yard, and never lived more than a mile away."

Many of the early settlers in Hancock County came for the south up the Napoleon Trace (700 E) or into the county on the Brookville Treaty Road (Route 52). The first task at hand for these folk was building shelter. Before a proper cabin could be built they sought shelter in three sided brush lean-to's or large hallow logs from the big trees in the. virgin forest. Sometimes the early cabins were made of polls and not hewn logs and the chinking was removed for summer ventilation.

During early times there was no windows in the log cabins but just greased paper over openings to let in the light. Over the years several of the early cabins have been torn down or moved. For example a two story cabin stood at Mt. Comfort and I 70 was owned both by Henry Beechman and Henry Smith. This cabin had two large rooms. Later a bathroom and a kitchen was added to the cabin. It was torn down down in 1936. The Thomas Fuqua Log Cabin built in 1831 was located near Eden. His first wife is buried the Eden Methodist Church Cemetery.

I believe the first settler in Hancock County was Andrew Evans in Blue River Township in 1818. Hancock became a county in 1828.

Enough I have told you every thing that I know and come things I don't. Talk to me at the Daily Reporter or at jskvarenina@hotmail.com.

2019-12-20

The Flood of 1913

by Joe Skvarenina

The Flood of 1913 was the worst flood in Hancock County History and it was a result of an 48 hour rain. It started on March 24, 1913 and on the next day, March 25, the Brandywine overflowed its banks and as a result a mighty river of flood flowed down the National Road. Every hour the deluge continued and the water rose higher. Persons in the city with livestock and buildings along the Brandywine and Potts Ditch were forced to remove their cattle and other livestock for safety. On Monday night the Pennsylvania Railroad Bridge across the Brandywine gave out and the last train to cross it was at 11:00 p.m. Th rain did not stop its downpour until 5:30 Match 25 but still the Brandywine rose and swelled with additional water from downstream. The Brandywine finally crested at 6:30 A.M. Potts Ditch which flows through the center of the city flooded everything along its way. The arch bridge at Fifth Street wasn't big enough to allow the flood water to flow through it so it poured over the arch bridge flooding the barns and chicken houses along Fifth and State Streets, The Fourth Street bridge lost its its mooring over Potts Ditch and floated downstream. Properties and homes near to Potts Ditch had to be evacuated. Water was in the basement of several properties along the way including Bert Orr's Store, South Street Methodist Church, Monger Garage, Hinchman Wagon Store and the Columbia hotel plus others. It was a real mess.

It is interesting to note the Arch bridge underground at Fifth and State Streets will soon be replaced by another structure. Rob Barnhart from Strike Force wants to know if anyone remembers a gentleman who in the 1970's or !980's went around and painted Holiday Murals of shop windows in the community? He had a sign shop. Do you know?

Enough. I have told you everything that I know and some things I don't. Talk to me at the jskvarenina@hotmail.com or the Daily Reporter.

2019-12-13

By Joseph Skvarenina

Have you ever gone to see the Jane Ross Reeves Octagon House in Shirley? It is quite a site and well worth the journey. The two story Octagon House at 400 Railroad Street have seen many changes over the years. Built in 1879 by Jane Ross Reeves after her husband's death for herself and her ten children. It was erected on the road between Willow Branch and Wilkinson on family property. It was rumored that Jane sold the family silver saved in a shoe box to build her sixteen room house. In 1907 on Jane's death the house was sold and served as a place for farm workers to stay. In 1970's it was used as a cattle barn. I recent times it sat abandoned and the owner was going to allow it to be used if for fire practice. In 1997-1998 it was saved by the Jane Ross Reeves Octagon House Foundation. When it was moved to its new site in Shirley it still weighed 90 tons after the removal of the chimneys to reduce the weight. The house had four chimneys. One chimney served four rooms-two up and two down. At its new location it was also placed on a full basement. Thanks to that community spirited group of citizens who made it all possible. The house looks like it did when originally built. There are only five octagon houses left standing in the state of Indiana. This one is special because it is restored with few changes except the porch. It is hoped that it will be used as a community center and it is available for tours. It is well furnished in the historic time period. Go see it.

Also I am currently working on a revision of the Shirley History 1990 to the present. Do you have anything you want to contribute? Let me know!

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2019-12-06

By
Joe Skvarenina

Candy Atkins writes, "Years ago I spoke to Ward Duncan. His family had my house before my grandparents did. He was kind enough to share an old photo and lots of information." The house is on Meridian and several people believe that it was part of the Underground Railroad. I understand that there was a secret room in the basement to hide runaway slaves. This is now the furnace room. Hancock County was a Quaker area at one time and I always wondered about possible UGRR (Underground Railroad) activities in county since the Quakers were so active in helping the slaves flee from captivity. I also believe that Pineview built circa 1829 in Brandywine Township was another stop on the UGRR. The house constructed by Richard Milburn has a room hidden behind the fireplace. Not much is available about UGRR sites because at the time it was a closely held secret. A Society of Friends (Quaker) publication helps us define the UGRR. The Underground Railroad has to do with the effort of helping slaves escape. Multiple incidences have been written about escaping slaves who seem to have vanished in one area only to have surfaced in a distant place. The slave captors were referred to as bloodhounds. Workers helping the slaves escape were referred to as agents or conductors. Safe houses were called stations or depots. Forms of transportation for the slaves were called locomotives. The routes of escape were called tracks. So the UGRR had its own coded language. What do you know about the UGRR? The Hancock County Historical Society recently had a program on the Underground Railroad which was very enlightening. Levi Coffin from Fountain City was a famous conductor on the Underground Railroad and he has written a very interesting book called "Reminiscences". It is worth the read. His house is a museum which you should take the kids too.

Enough. I have told you everything that I know and some things I don't. Talk to me [@jskvarenina@hotmail.com](mailto:jskvarenina@hotmail.com) or the Daily Reporter

2019-11-29

Thanks to Paul McNeil and the State Library for more information on the Home Stove Company and foundry. Home Stove Foundry left Greenfield probably in 1901. The location was on Osage Street and it was located on one and 1/2 acres under cover.

Around 1850 people were forsaking their fire places for cast iron stoves to cook and to heat their homes. These stoves were very ornate and became very popular. Mike Roney at Tuttle's has two such stoves in his collection. One is in the restaurant area at the Orchard.

George Johann Alig (1852 – 1941) was an enterprising young man who came to Indianapolis in 1871 from Switzerland. Alig had no specific skills when he arrived, but being an industrious sort, he found work right away at D. Root & Co. By 1875, Alig was one of the well-heeled incorporators of the Indianapolis Stove Company, but he sold his interest in that business to build Home Stove Company in 1893. After serving in WWI, son Clarence became Vice President of Home Stove and President of Home Land Investment. He also served as Heating Engineer in charge of the furnace department. There were three other brothers and a sister. In 1919 he became president of Home Stove. Clarence died in 3 months of his father.

In 1946 Home Stove, at least the warehouse, was located at 501-535 Kentucky Avenue. It was three stores high and a block long, it was leased to the Indianapolis Warehouse Company and contained quantities of sisal and mexican hemp. A fire broke out and did \$100,000 worth of damage and 10 companies were called to put out the fire. That is the last I can find on Home Stove.

In response to a story online Roger Alig and Jenn Alig claim that Home Stove still exists with an Alig family reunion or a Home Stove Board Meeting in the summer. But they don't manufacturing stoves any more. The Alig family is scattered all over the nation.

Enough. I have told you everything that I know and some I don't talk to me at jksvarenina@hotmail.com or the Daily Reporter

*Picture included below



2019-11-15

By
Joe Skvarenina

Linda Comstock Teal writes, 'I read your article on the train wreck in September of 1956 and I remember it well. I was 9 years old and lived at 427 N. East St. The smell was almost overwhelming and we were several blocks away. My grandparents lived on West South Street where the parking lot is now. They were in the upstairs apartment of the Leonard Shively (I believe that was his name, I know he had the Shively Dairy) house. I do not recall if they were evacuated, but they probably were. My grandfather died of cancer in 1966, but whether it was related to the toxicity of the wreck is unknown. I do remember that for years afterwards when it rained you could still smell the chemicals that were in the ground.' Linda also adds, "I enjoy reading your column each week. My husband and I have just moved back to Greenfield after a long hiatus and it has been fun catching up." Train wrecks or other accidents were a common occurrence during the heyday of the railroad. Railroads were important to the growth of Hancock County. For example the Shirley Creosote Company was located one mile north of Shirley. On July 4, 1906, John Gordon, an employee of the plant, was electrocuted when he stepped on the 'third rail' which provided current to pull the cars of the railroad ties. In 1943 a train wreck tore away both ends of the Greenfield railroad station scattering freight and wreckage for almost three blocks and halting traffic for 12 hours. Rails were twisted and torn from the ties for almost three blocks. Riley Avenue and Pennsylvania Streets crossings were blocked.. The mishap, occurred shortly before 8 p.m. Saturday evening. The train was a westbound freight approximately 80 cars. It took 100 men to restore the tracks for rail traffic. On January 30, 1963, 30 boxcars of an Indianapolis bound freight train were jerked off the tracks and stacked up in block-long pile-up when the axle assembly broke at Greenfield. A railroad official said the damages would cost about \$500,000. The broke axle occurred on the 25th car of a 105 unit train. All aboard!

Enough. I have told you everything that I know and some things I don't. Talk to me.

2019-11-08

By
Joe Skvarenina

I am fascinated by Log Cabins and the county has several of them. Pioneers used the material available to them to build their homes. The Hancock County Historical Society recently did a tour of Log Homes with the opportunity to buy a root beer float. There were five cabins on the tour. Did you go? I got to the root beer float cabin. I have written about the two story Thomas Cabin built between 1830-1850, 20x18, and the Log Jail moved to the Riley Park in 1967. The Thomas family have lived on this farm since 1869. It is near McCordsville. The Fairgrounds cabin was originally in Vernon Township on 950 North just west of 50W. It was inside a barn and was donated for the fairgrounds by the Boucher family. The Burris Cabin was built by Jonathan Burris one of the first settlers of Buck Creek Township. This 20x20 cabin was located inside a home on 300 North just east of Mt. Comfort Road and was stored for several years and rebuilt in 2015. The Harlow Cabin was relocated from Kentucky and restored at its current location. There are different types of Logs used in this cabin compared to other logs used in Hancock County. In addition there is the Shambles cabin in Cumberland along the Old National Road area built about 1840. Also there is the cabin that Rick Edwards is storing from the old Dale Kuhn property. Is your house or barn built around a log cabin? When the settlers first came to this virgin wilderness they left the logs rounded hewn construction came later.

Indiana Preservation magazine tell us that log hewn construction is a melting pot of traditions combining British forms with techniques of central Europeans. "Hewing logs into square shapes and notching the corners into doves tails required time and skill." Many old log homes today are covered by siding and insulation. In some cases, log cabins got wood siding shortly after building to protect the chinking and the logs. I know that in case of the Shambles Cabin a house burned down from around the cabin. Rick Edwards knew that the cabin was there when he tore down the house around it. I travel the National Road and in Pershing there was a massive two store log cabin on the south side of the road which had a house built around it. Unfortunately it was torn down.

What do you know about log cabins in Hancock County? Is your old house have log cabin on the inside? Enough. I have told you everything that I know and some things I don't. Talk to me at jskvarenina@hotmail.com or the Daily Reporter.

2019-11-01

By
Joe Skvarenina

The Hancock Historical Society was founded September 26, 1964 at the Presbyterian Church. Those present voted to proceed with a permanent organization. Mrs. Paul Ogg was Temporary Chairman. Two themes of the first meeting were the need for the Historical Society and History can be fun. Committee to select permanent officers included Mrs. Amy Rooney, Miss Bev. Montrose, Tom Williams, Lester Fiqua, and Paul Terrell. In 1963 the lighted display case at the hospital was the first activity. In it was exhibited Civil War items from the collections of CW Tidrow and John Sullivan. In 1966 June Williams started writing a column for the newspaper called Halcyon Hancock where we live the life of Riley. The Society has two museums, the Chapel in the Park and the Log Jail. The Log Jail museum was moved to Riley Park in 1967. This structure was built in 1853 on the south side of the public square according to the specification issued by the county commissioners. This structure was beside the gas company on South Street when moved to Riley Park. The move to Riley Park would have been the second mover for the Log Jail. The interior and exterior are solid logs 12 inches thick. The walls and floors in the second floor cell room are nailed with square nails about two inches apart. This was cheap security for those who wanted to saw out. The cell doors were of heavy oak also filled with nails. When built the windows were barred. When constructed, it was intended to provide a jail without the use of expensive iron. The Chapel in the Park the former Philadelphia United Methodist Church was built in 1856. It was first moved to the site in 1906. It was moved again to Riley Park in June 1981. Marjorie Hughes Walker was the first President of the Hancock Historical Society. Later the Society had a lighted display case in the Hancock County Court House. In 1965 Bibles were exhibited in the case in the County Courthouse by the Historical Society. The Bibles illustrated different ages and languages in their texts. The Hancock County Historical Society in 1965 estimated that Hancock County had an average of one church every five or six miles.

What do you know about Spring Lake? Located about one half mile southwest of Philadelphia, the Spring Lake Park had been named for a small lake created by a dam in 1885. It was first known as Dyers Grove. In 1912 it was platted and in 1927 it became an incorporated town. The Spring Lake Men's Club met in the old ice house and was incorporated in 1947. This group raised \$16,110 and eventually constructed the community center.

Enough. I have told you everything that I know and some things I don't. Talk to me at jskvarenina@hotmail.com or the Daily Reporter.

2019-10-25

By
Joe Skvarenina

But what's left to see in Greenfield today from the National Road era? On the courthouse square at the site of the Chapman later Gooding tavern now stands Greenfield's City Hall. Other buildings site included a taxi stand and Peter Pan Diner. The Gooding Tavern was torn down in about 1920. It had some famous guests including former President Martin Van Buren, former Vice President Richard M. Johnson, Henry Clay, abolitionist John Brown and Congressman George Washington Julian were guests at the establishment. George Knox an African American barber had his shop at the site. He later went on to establish the Indiana Recorder one of the first African American Newspapers in the state.

Johnson was Vice President in 1836 and he was also second in command to William Henry Harrison beforehand. Legend has it that Johnson was the one who killed Tecumseh at the Battle of Thames. Several participants in the American and British Army believe that he was responsible. The claim was revived when Johnson became candidate for Vice President in 1836. Johnson himself said he didn't know who killed Tecumseh. A very likely true story is a group of frontiersmen came across a body they thought was Tecumseh and cut strips of skins from his back to be used as razor straps. But Tecumseh's biographer says that his body never came into the possession of whites but was recovered by his followers and take away at night to become a folk hero. Tecumseh led a federation of Indiana against white settlers in the Northwest Territory. Most of the action was in Indiana and Ohio.

Enough. I have told you everything that I know and some things I don't. talk to me at jskvarenina@hotmail.com or the Daily Reporter

2019-10-18

by
Joe Skvarenina

In March 1939 Hoagy Carmichael noted composer, conductor and musician visited the Riley Home. The event was arranged by Arthur Downing. A luncheon was held for Carmichael at the Columbia Hotel in his honor. Students who attended Indiana University Revised during the Carmichael era were invited to attend. Mr. and Mrs. Marvin Jones hotel operators hosted the event

Richard Sudhalter in his book "Stardust Melody" on Carmichael tells that Hoagy rode on Riley's shoulders when he was six. The family lived in Lockerbie at the time. Later Carmichael set Riley's poem "when to Frost was on the Punkin to Music." It was released in 1956. Hoagy showed his appreciation to Riley when he wrote an unpublished ode to Riley:

"You carried me to your tender way along Lockerbie Street,
To Candy stores most every day,
Just giving me a treat."

Sudhalter goes on to tell regional speech shows up in other Carmichael songs like "Washboard Blues" and "Rockin "just to name a few. Ted Malone from NBC in 1940 broadcast his program "Between the Bookends" from the Riley Home. Actor James Brolin and presidential candidate Eugene McCarthy visited the site in 1962. McCarthy taught poetry at College. Carmichael best as far as I am concerned was "Stardust".

Enough. I have told you ever thing that I know and some things I don't. Talk to me at jskvarenina@hotmail.com or the Daily Reporter.

2019-10-11

By
Joe Skvarenina

In times gone by you would occasionally see meetings of the Old Settlers reported in the newspaper. One was held in the Warrington area near at Holiday's Grove on August 21, 1874 and one of the largest on September 22, 1883 at Copeland's Grove also near Warrington. . Others were held in Greenfield in 1880 with similar meeting being conducted at Fortville and Oaklandon. People liked to get together and share tales about early times and living in unbroken wilderness. They would share artifacts and tell stories of the times of not so long ago. In fact an old settlers meeting at Greenfield on August 5, 1882 ten thousand people were reported to attend. Riley also attended Old Settlers Meetings

In Fact the Delphi Citizen tells, Thursday, August 11th, 1949
“When John Odell was secretary of the Old Settlers in 1885 as he conducted the meeting he noticed sitting among the crowd James Whitcomb Riley. Mr. Odell called Riley to the platform for a few remarks, and Riley read a poem he had written for the day.
The poem, unpublished and unnamed is in the possession of Josephine Odell, who has kept all her father’s minutes of the meetings at which he served as secretary from 1862 to 1919.
(Miss Odell intends to give this book to the public library.)

The poem which Miss Odell named tentatively “To the Pioneers” contains these lines:

Again thro’ mists of memory arise
The simple scenes of home before the eyes,
The happy mother hug humming with her
Wheel,
The dear old melodies that used to steal
So drowsily on the summer air.
The square of sunshine upon the open door,
That notched its edge across the puncheon
Floor.
And made a golden coverlet whereon,
The god of slumber had a picture drawn,
Of babyhood in all the loveliness,
Of dimpled cheek and limb and linsey dress.
Thus it was one-hundred and thirty years ago to this very day."

The Carroll County Historical Society just completed a recent Old Settlers Meeting in Delphi. Enough. I have told you everything that I know and seem thing I don't. Talk to me at jskvarenina@hotmail.com or the Daily Reporter.

2019-10-04

By
Joe Skvarenina

There is a Lustron Home for sale on South State Street, east side of the road near the pool shop and it is reportedly restored. There are two of these home in Hancock County. Dick Pickett built one on the corner of Spring and Boyd behind Bradford builders in 1949. It was built by Metal Art Buildings of Indianapolis. An early design architect was Carl Koch. A Lustron Home is an all steel manufactured home which is fireproof, attractive, indestructible and modern. It took between 10 days or three weeks to build. It was sold with various color schemes. The floor plan was six rooms and a bath. There were just 37 component parts. The home was first exhibited at the Indiana State Fair in 1949.. If you go online you can see photos of the inside of the home which is for sale. It is interesting to note that Lustron Homes were forerunner of the post war prefabricated homes for home coming veterans and at one time in Indiana there were 157 such structures. A total of 2680 homes were built in the US. In 1950 the federal government's Reconstruction Finance Corporation bought the equipment from Lustron Prefabricated Housing Corporation for \$6 million. The RFC was the only bidder. Previous the government through the RFC had loaned Lustron \$37 1/2 million. It seems the home just wouldn't sell for enough because of the expense of construction and the company was using the loans to meet operating expenses. The Lustron was losing money on every home that was sold. Lustron was a good home and people liked it but the company couldn't make a profit.

Also do you remember when your phone was a party line? Bob Holland tells my parents got on a 4 party line in 1956 phone numbers started with FA6-0000 for Maxwell area. I think each party had a different ring tone long / short or a combination. What do you recall?

Enough. I have told you everything that I know as some things I don't. Talk to me at jskvarenina@hotmail.com or the Daily Reporter.

2019-09-27

By
Joe Skvarenina

Did you know Don Lindsay? He recently passed away and is sorely missed. He was a court bailiff, former state trooper, drove for two Indiana Governors, historian and a great man. I honor his integrity and will forever miss my conversations with him. Don died of cancer and his niece Aleah Lindsay Kaip wrote concerned about family cancer clusters and the families living in Greenfield during the Pennsylvania RR train derailment and subsequent chemical explosion which occurred on September 4, 1956 (according to an article in the *Daily Reporter*, dated September 4, 1956) . Also according to the *Reporter*, the train was carrying the chemicals, Ethylene Oxide and Amyl Acetate; which were the cause of the explosion. Aleah indicates" I have spoken to some who lived in the area at the time and their recollections were the toxic burn was immense, causing several injuries at the time and lasting several hours. Many bystanders viewed this event, even though fear of future explosions. Further, I understand there were also food items on some of the derailed cars. I am writing to identify as many other families as possible who may also have lived near the derailment (or been there for a significant amount of time) and may have experienced the same cancer clusters as our family. This will help to identify a common genetic marker, if there is one."

History tells us it was a 23 car derailment going eastbound. It was passing through town at 10:35 in the morning. Four cars piled up at the crossing at Meek Street. All the families within three block of Meek Street had to evacuate their homes. Red Cross set up first aid tents. Additional fire department from Rushville, Warren Township, Franklin Township, Washington Township, Mt. Comfort, and Carthage also attended the blaze. Many residents of the area became ill because of the toxic fumes.

Enough. I have told you everything that I know and some things I don't talk to me at jskvarenina@hotmail.com at the Daily Reporter. Thanks Aleah.

2019-09-20

By
Joe Skvarenina

From approximately 1920 to 1950 Hancock County was in the middle of the Indiana tomato growing area. Planting tomatoes wasn't easy. It took a couple of boys to set plants out by hand as the planter went down the field rows. In 1913 John Souder and his brother in law Harry Banker were determined to become tomato farmers. Souder's farm was on the Convance property. The dynamic duo established a canning factory on Osage Street at the old location of Indiana Box Company. There were many canning factories in Hancock County during this period. Farmers' fields blossomed with the tomato crop. During this time period the tomato was considered to cure all that troubles you. Tomatoes were said to cure diabetes, brights disease and to be a very effect blood and intestinal cleanser. Also they were supposed to be great thirst quenchers. After WW I the workers at the factory and the field were German prisoners of war soldiers. They were housed in the Interurban cars south of town. Some stayed in Greenfield after the war and raised families. Italian and German prisoners of war from WW II were also used in the fields

After my last column on this subject, Anna Wallace wrote that her mother, Fannie Reynolds worked at the Canning Factory in Greenfield in 1944. According to Anna, one of the Germans took a liking to her mother and wrote her and wanted to marry her and take her back to the old country. The only problem she was married at the time with four children. Her husband didn't appreciate it.

The Mayor of Morristown as done it again. He was the Grand Marshall of Derby Day Parade in Morristown on July27 which would have been the 70th running. The communities of Greenfield, Morristown and Shelbyville owe much to Bob Wortman's generosity and kindness. He is a gentle soul who has established many programs for the benefit of these communities from Libraries, reading programs, cancer and dialysis centers and pharmacies. Bob doesn't like credit but he deserves it. So when you see him say thanks.

By the way I remember Ponderosa tomatoes when I was growing up. I can't seem to find plants anymore. Enough I told you everything that I know and some things I don't. Talk to me at JSkvarenina@hotmail.com or at the Daily Reporter

2019-09-13

By
Joe Skvarenina

There is a rumor there was a basketball court upstairs at the Butler Soup Kitchen also once known as the Hinchman Hall & Wagon shop. I contacted Greg Roland the unofficial basketball historian of Hancock County and he tells "About the only thing that I know about it is that it doesn't appear that it was used for any official high school games. Looks like it was used somewhere between 1910-20. Tom Williams did have a list of players that he came across somehow, so matching players' names with dates they used the court and when the players graduated from high school would show that those players listed already would have graduated. So it was probably used for "independent" games which was also popular during that time." Greg goes on to tell us if you go upstairs all that is left is a small room which could have been used for concessions. But it is a big open room which fits the history of what players and schools were looking for prior to gymnasiums being built. In the good old days it was called Hinchman Hall and maybe pick-up games between our rival Knightstown and Greenfield happened at the site.

But Hinchman Hall and Wagon shop, 202 East Main Street, also served other purposes. The Daily Reporter tells us on May 23 & 24 1924 it was the site for entertainment for the local Klaven of the KKK. The film "'Toll of Justice" was being shown in the Hall with the doors opening at 6:30, 35 cents adult and 15 cents for children. Klansmen were encouraged to bring their families.. Also around the same time and across the street the "Why Not" theater was showing D.W. Griffith's "Birth of the Nation". A flick which had a cast of 18,000 people, 3,000 horses and was on 18 reels. This film glamorized the role of the Klan in the country. James Madison is writing a new book entitles "Rise and Fall" of Klan through IU Press it is due out by 2020.If you have stories or photos he can use let me know.

Last, one of the local Klan leaders was Daisy Bushwiller, a Quaker preacher. In addition Greenfield Barr served in congregations in Muncie, Lewisville, Fairmount and New Castle. She entered the Klan along with GOP politics in the early 1920's. She served as the first female Vice GOP Chair in Indiana. She was brought into the Klan by D.C. Stephenson. She was also active in the Women's Temperance Movement. She eventually went on to serve the national Klan movement. Barr told a group in Marion Indiana that if Christ were on the earth at the present time he would have certainly joined the Klan.

Enough. I have told you everything that I know and some things I don't talk to me at JSkvarenina@hotmail .com or the Daily Reporter.

2019-09-06

By
Joe Skvarenina

Did you go to the wall in July? Thanks for Stillinger's and others for sponsoring this event. There are 58,318 names on the Vietnam Veterans Memorial Wall that heals. There were 11 casualties from Hancock County which included Mark Draper, Michael Ebert, Elvin Gose, Rodger Haste, Frank Marks, John Modglin, Huger Phelps, Michael Dean, Norris Borgman, William Brees, and Vaughn Brown. John Modglin was Hancock County's first Vietnam death. The replica wall has been to 600+ communities and now Greenfield is one. We honor our Vietnam vets. Greenfield has other Vietnam commemorations also.

A plaque on the wall of the armory in Riley Park celebrates Greenfield's Company "D" Ranger of the 151 Infantry who were called up by President Lyndon Johnson to fight in Nam. Two of the men from this celebrated unit, Sp4 Charles Larkin and Sgt Robert Smith lost their lives in the struggle. But the old company "D" is no more and it was disbanded in Greenfield after they were back one year from Vietnam. A signal company is now in its place in the armory. It is believed that the designation is now held in Puerto Rico.

Now there is a Vietnam Memorial along with a Revolutionary War Memorial on South Nine. There is also the Memorial at the location of the old city hall. The Memorial Building is a WWI commemoration.

There was no National Guard Unit in Greenfield until 1947. The Armory was not constructed until 1957 at a cost of \$190,000. At first the Armory became the home of a Tank Company of the 151st Infantry. It was also to be used for community gatherings.

Enough. I have told you everything that I know and some things I don't. Talk to me at jskvarenina@Hotmail.com or the Daily Reporter.

2019-08-30

By
Joe Skvarenina

The 1930's weren't the easiest times in Hancock County. The Depression, when it finally came to the community hit hard. No matter in what community that you resided, the children of the Depression, maybe your parents, should be considered unique. My dad was born in 1923 and had all the habits of a Depression baby. He saved every bit of string, tin foil, rubber bands, Christmas wrap (to be used again next year) and bent nails. As a child I remember having to straighten nails out for later use. Prior to the arrival of electricity, coal oil or commonly called kerosene was used to light and cook. Did you ever attempt to read by a dim kerosene lamp? Coal also provided heat for the house. My father said that he and the rest of the siblings would go to the railroad yard to look for coal that had fallen off the trains to take home for the furnace. In the 1950's, I can still remember my Dad banking the furnace at night. Some stations sold a combination of ice and coal. Burt Baker's old store across from Riley Park was at first such a business. Later the site was a Sun-Glo and a Speedway during the 1960's. The buildings on the site are long gone. My mother a child of the Depression would "put up" everything she got her hands upon including meat. The Mason Glass jars were invented in 1858 by John Landis Mason as an alternative to the tin can for preserving food which made home canning more practical. Thank heavens for Muncie's five Ball brothers who invented the screw on caps and gasket sealed tops. Summer and fall were seasons that people used to sustain themselves. Now I am a baby boomer and you would think I wouldn't do all this stuff? I want store bought bread and grape jelly But I still garden and we freeze now instead of can. I still drink sassafras tea. How about you?

One family would tell me when they first got electric lights in their house they would turn them all on and go on the hill outside to see what they looked like. Enough. I have told you everything that I know and some things I don't. Talk to me at jskvarenina@Hotmail.com or the Daily Reporter.

2019-08-23

by
Joe Skvarenina

People want to place John Dillinger in Hancock. To my knowledge he never robbed a bank in our community. But he did come as close as Irvington robbing a drug store which is now the Lincoln Square Pancake House

Ryan Brown an Associate Professor at Illinois State University writes, "I am a professor at Illinois State University in Normal, Illinois. My maternal grandfather was Charlie Snider, who grew up on the Snider farm near Cumberland, Indiana. He met my grandmother while she was a student at Indiana Central now the University of Indianapolis, and he moved to southern Indiana early in their married life. I grew up near French Lick, Indiana. Nevertheless, my genealogy bug kicked in a few years ago, and I discovered the Snider Cemetery in Hancock County.

My grandfather Charlie was proud of two family members... His second cousin John Dillinger, and his great-grandfather Joseph "Rooster" Chapman. One of Adaline's brothers, Jacob Snider, married Joseph's daughter Rebecca. I have a great picture of Jacob and Rebecca. I think Rebecca's sister also married a Snider brother.

In the past year, I have stopped in to Hancock County to visit the Snider cemetery, see the Historical Rooster Marker, of Chapman fame.' Some time ago amateur genealogist Sharon Kingen also told, " Adaline Lancaster was the daughter of Isaac Snider and Elizabeth Leah Watkins. From what I have examined, I believe that she was their youngest child. Leah died in 1838. Adaline's tombstone says that she was born in 1832, but census records show that she was born about 1828. In either case, she would have been a young child when her mother died. Her stepmother, Mary Collins, would have been the "mother" she probably knew better. Adaline married Francis H. Lancaster 17 May 1849 in Hancock Co., IN. Francis was a blacksmith. Apparently he had a shop in Cumberland or that general vicinity for quite some time. They appeared in the censuses in Marion Co. from 1850 through 1880. Most of those years they were recorded as living in Cumberland. Francis died in 1896. Adaline lived on in Indianapolis and appeared in the 1900 and 1910 censuses there. Francis and Adaline had 12 children although 1 died before 1900 and another died between 1900 and 1910. Adaline died in 1913. Adaline and Francis are of some special interest because their youngest child, Mary E. Lancaster, married John Wilson Dillinger. They were the parents of THE John Herbert Dillinger. However, Mary died when John was only about 4 years old. He would have been about 10 when Adaline (his maternal grandmother) died. I find it somewhat ironic that Mary Lancaster/Dillinger's younger brother David Lancaster was recorded in the 1910 census as being a city detective in Marion Co. I can't help but wonder how the family must have felt about having both a policeman and a notorious criminal in the family..." So this is Hancock County's Dillinger's story.

Enough. I have told you everything that I know and some things I don't. Talk to me at jskvarenina@hotmail.com or the Daily Reporter.

2019-08-16

Swope and Chicken Hill

By
Joe Skvarenina

A gentleman called me the other day and wanted additional information on the Swope family. In 1853 Henry Swope served as Greenfield Postmaster. Later on it seems that H.A. Swope was one of five business men to form a stock company to carry out the banking business in the town of Greenfield. On September 4, 1876 the Greenfield Banking Company was the first bank in Hancock County to open its door on the corner of Main Street and State Streets. The others founders were Nelson Bradley, J. Ward walker, Morgan Chandler, and S.T. Dickerson. Nelson Bradley was the first President and J Ward Walker was the first cashier. The Bank was located at the site of the old Masonic Building. In addition Henry was at one time Clerk of the Hancock County Court, a member of the Odd Fellows Lodge, and served in the Home Guard during the Civil War. I do believe that Henry was married to Mary who was one of the founders of the Cosmopolitan Club for women. The ladies would have self-improvement speakers in their homes. If anyone knows more about the Swope's of Greenfield please let me know. He would like to know if they are connected to the Swope's of West Virginia.

Ned Arthur the other day asked me about Chicken Hill and he was surprised when I knew the site. Chicken Hill is located at CR's 400W and 400S in Sugar Creek Township. In the 1920's and 1930's New Palestine residents used to buy their eggs from Mrs. Everson and thus the name of the intersection came into being. I been told that there was an old mill in the area and now all that is left is the mill run and probably a chicken coop or two.

Did you know that first Hancock County Sheriff was John Foster and he was appointed Sheriff by the Governor in 1828? The county provided the first jail during his term. Samuel Duncan was the second sheriff and he was elected in 1832. He was the sheriff when the first jail burned down. It seems that in 1833 John Hays an ex -sheriff from Rush County became insane and committed battery and wandered into Hancock County. He was arrested by Dunbar and put in the first log jail. According to the record Hays started a fire in his cell and was consumed by it before he could be rescued...During the 1840's there was some concern about the conditions in the next jail. According to some, prisoners were subjected to some poor conditions. The Hancock County jail at the time was found to be too damp and unhealthy so it was closed. It was during this time that Hancock County would ship prisoners to Indianapolis for holding. In the early days this was by stagecoach or horseback and later by train...In 1874 the Grange was organizing an independent county ticket which backed the appeal for salary grabs. The Sheriff's salary would be \$1200.00...In 1870 he first white child born in Hancock County, Jared Meek, ran for Sheriff and he was defeated...Robert Brown became Sheriff just in time to look into the murder of Sam Derry. She was killed in a fight with his sister and her husband over the ownership of a small gosling. In 1859 to 1863 the Hancock County Democrat tell us the Sheriff was busy with the problems developing between folks from Virginia, North Carolina, Kentucky and New England over the Civil War issues. There were shouting matches and fighting in the streets and those involved spent night in jail...The Civil War ended and the soldiers were returning home by

1865 and the County Sheriff still had to deal with brawls and unruly behavior by the residents. The Civil War still lingered with local residents...Last, rumor has it that one local family cared for a Confederate soldier, the husband's brother, in their Greenfield home. If discovered the family would have been charged with treason. The Sheriff bought all these small histories and you will need to contact Mike.

Enough. I have told you everything that I know and some things I don't. Talk to me at the jskvarenina@hotmail.com or the Daily Reporter.

2019-08-09

By
Joe Skvarenina

Mark Smith writes, “there is another link between Carroll and Hancock counties in the Milroy family: John Milroy, brother of our county founder Samuel, was a figure in your area at one time. He was a surveyor for the National Road among many other roles. His wife, Isabella, was a sister to Martha Huston Milroy, wife of our county founder. Irony isn't it!" Yes it is!

Beverly Smith provides us with information on John Milroy. John Milroy was born in Penn Valley, Pennsylvania on December 12, 1776. His parents were Henry and Agnes Milroy. John and his brother Samuel migrated to Nelson Co. Kentucky and they each married there. John married Isabel Huston (1808) and Samuel married her sister Martha Huston (1810) in Kentucky. Then many of the children, their families along with the mother Abigail moved to Washington Co., Indiana. Samuel and Martha eventually settled in Carroll Co. Both John and Samuel were in the Indiana legislature and Samuel more so. Samuel was the father of Gen. Robert Huston Milroy of Civil War history. John was Robert's uncle. John was also on the board of the beginning of what is now the University of Indiana. John was also involved in the National Road building there in Indiana. John was in the militia and was termed General John Milroy; I think his brother also had that title. John was in the 1812 War in Kentucky. We think it was soon after that when he moved to Indiana. He and Isabel lived in Washington, Lawrence, Monroe, Jackson and maybe Carroll before settling in Hancock County in about 1828. John and Isabel had nine children, Henry, Angeline, James, Martha, Samuel, Alexander, John, Mary, and Nancy. Isabel died in 1845 while visiting her sister, Martha in Carroll Co.

We have confirmed information that James Milroy was my great grandmother's (Mary Jeanette or Genette Milroy) father and from her obituary and other documents we know her mother was Mary Ann Deming. Mary who went by Genette her second name was born in Monroe Co., but in one document she stated she moved to Hancock Co. with her parents as a small child. James and his brothers, Henry and John go to fight in the Texas War of Independence. Genette was born May 25, 1835 (according to her death certificate) in Bloomington, Monroe Co. IN. We have not been able to locate any marriage record for James and Mary Ann nor a divorce record. Mary Ann married a James Avis in 1837 and though we don't have a marriage record for that, we do have her divorce decree. Mr. Avis went to Texas also and apparently Mary Ann didn't want to go to Texas! She then married a man named John Hill and remained in Indiana until after his death. In the divorce decree she states she has two children by Avis and we have documentation as to what happened to each of those children. She also had 5 children by Mr. Hill, two of which died quite young and we have documentation on what happened to each of those children. Mary Ann's obit states she has 6 living children and one of her daughters by Hill is mentioned in Mary Jeanette's obit. So Jeanette knew of her mother and her half siblings. The six children living were: Mary Jeanette who lived with the Milroy grandparents, the Avis boy and girl who are farmed out to Avis family members and reared by them and then the three Hill children who live to adulthood. Henry and his wife die in Texas. John's son John is believed to have died in Texas on in route home from Texas and was the son who John had settling James' estate as James died in Harrisburg (now Houston) Texas in 1839.

I have no Bible records or such on James' birth, only family genealogy that names all the children and we have been able to determine what happened to all the children except Alexander though from family information know when he died....he didn't marry. He died in Indiana, but just where and where buried is not known. We have a census showing Jeanette living with John in 1850. We have land transactions of John's where she is signing along with Nancy Milroy and a letter that mentions her that was written to her uncle Samuel, John's son Samuel. These families all used the same names with different second names. John died there in Greenfield on Oct. 18, 1858 and was buried in the Old Cemetery along with two of his daughter-in-laws and one daughter of Henry's. This cemetery is at the end of South Street.

By Act of Congress in 1848 all of the road within the state of Indiana was transferred to Indiana and the Legislature organized the Central Plank Company and was given control of the road between the eastern edge of Hancock County and the western Putnam County line. The Company improved the road by planking it in about 1850. General John Milroy had the contract for the improvement of the road through Hancock County.

Enough. I have told you everything I know and some things I don't. Talk to me at jskvarenina@hormail.com or at the Daily Reporter.

2019-08-02

Newton Spencer

by
Joe Skvarenina

Newton Spencer Ramsey was born in Parke County on March 5, 1855 to Robert and Mary A (Ramsey). His father was in the mercantile business. He had two sisters, Mary and Martha. His father died July 28, 1865. Newton was forced to earn a living at a young age.

Newton taught school in Fayette and Henry Counties. He studied law with Joseph I. Little and David McKee in Connersville. In 1888 he was admitted to the Bar in Indianapolis and moved to Johnson County Kansas to practice law. In Kansas he served one term as prosecuting attorney. In 1890 he came to Greenfield to practice law with E.J. Binford. He had married Viola Banks on November 26, 1885. She was the daughter of Andrew J. and Viola Banks. Mr. Banks was also involved in the mercantile business. Their home at 22 North Pennsylvania Street has been occupied by six generations of the family. In 1894 he served one term as Center Township Justice of the Peace.

When Newton Spencer came to Greenfield there were many local newspapers. These publications included the Hancock Jeffersonian owned by Richard Strickland with an annual subscription fee of \$1.00, the Greenfield Globe/Daily/ Evening Star owned by Ben Strickland, the Wednesday morning Greenfield Republican, the Hancock County Democrat, the Herald, the Evening Tribune plus probably others. In 1899 he took charge of the Evening Tribune and the Weekly Republican from W.S. Montgomery until his appointment as Postmaster on JUNE 5, 1902. In 1904 Newton Spencer was one of the founders and a President and one of the founders of Associated Charities of Greenfield. After his duties ended as Postmaster in 1906 Newton Spencer bought interest in Greenfield Weekly Globe and the Evening/Daily Star on December, 1906 with Ben Strickland and a third partner Eugene E. Davis. It was printed at the Globe plant in Greenfield. He eventually sold his interest and established the Daily Reporter on April 27, 1908. He was actively assisted by his wife Viola in the operations of the newspaper.

In March 1909 he bought from Greenfield Printing and Publishing or Ben Strickland the Evening Star and its subscription list for \$200. In 1910 Newton bought from Walter S. Montgomery the Evening Tribune and the Weekly Republican and merged then with the Daily Reporter. Marshall Winslow had been with the Tribune and the Republican when it was sold by W.S. Montgomery. Marshall served as City editor until he went to Europe with the Red Cross in WW I. After the war he came back to Greenfield and went to work for the Hancock County Democrat. It might be interesting to note that Spencer served as Hancock County Republican Chairman from 1896-1900. He was also appointed postmaster at one time. The house immediately behind Bradley Methodist church is the Spencer Homestead.

Enough. I have told you everything that I know and some things I don't. Talk to me at jskvarenina@hotmail.com or the Daily Reporter.

2019-07-26

By
Joe Skvarenina

In 1929 the entire nation suffered one of the greatest economic shocks in history with the crash of the stock market and the closure of the banks. Millions of Americans lost their jobs and joined bread lines across the nation. The President at the time, Herbert Hoover, had a hands-off approach that did little to right the economy. As a result most Americans believed like the Tennessee Valley Association and starting agencies like the Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation. But the first New Deal showed only modest results. In 1935 FDR realized he needed to do more to win the 1936 presidential elections so Roosevelt proposed the second round of programs called the Second New Deal. Congress passed and FDR signed the Social Security Act, Works Progress Administration, Wagner Act, Rural Electric Administration Act plus others. By 1930 90% of city dwellers had electricity while 9 out of 10 farmers had none. The Rural Electrification Administration was created by Executive Order as an Independent Bureau in 1935. In 1936 Congress authorized the Rural Electrification Act. In 1939 REA was reorganized as a Division of the Department of Agriculture charged with administering loan programs for electrification and telephone services in rural areas. 90% of urban dwellers had electricity by the 1930's only 1 out of 10 farmers did. By 1939 the REA had helped to establish 417 coops serving 288,000 households. By 1939 25% of the rural households had electricity. Ninestar is a product of the Rural Electrification Administration. Mr. Roosevelt had a lasting effect on this country

In 1940 Claude Wichard from Delphi in Carroll County was Roosevelt's Secretary of Agriculture. In 1946 became the Chief of the REA. He made at least two appearances as REA boss in Hancock County one being at an annual meeting which was held at the Weil Theater.

When FDR died in 1945, 9 out of 10 farms were electrified.

I am going to put on a panel discussion in September entitled "When electricity and the telephone first came to the farm" if you are interested or know some you should participate please let me know at jksvarenina@hotmail.com or at the Daily Reporter. Enough. Talk to me.

2019-07-19

Hancock County Rural Telephone

By
Joe Skvarenina

John Apple was President of the McCordsville telephone Company in the prewar years when the company was suffering because of old poles, wire and other items. In those year it was very difficult to get the necessary materials. In 1947 Mr. Apple was appointed to a committee which let to five small telephone companies I Hancock County to join hands and form the Hancock County Rural Telephone Company in November 1950. John was elected as one of the first directors and continued in that role until his death in 1975. He was instrumental in seeing the HRTC received a REA loan in 1952. John saw the initial number of subscribers go from 800 to 3300 member at the time of his death in 1975.

In November, 1950, McCordsville, Maxwell, Mohawk, New Eden and Willow Branch telephone companies consolidated to form Hancock Rural Telephone Corporation ("HRTC"), a telephone cooperative. In 1952, the REA approved a loan to HRTC and by the spring of 1953, the five exchanges of the company were consolidated into four dial offices serving approximately 550 members. Conversely, Hancock County REMC had reach 2,000 members by 1954. The original incorporators of the Hancock Rural Telephone Corporation were Gerry Henry, Harley R. Spurry, John Apple, Joseph Steele and Ralph Fisk.

The 1960's saw HRTC expand beyond the boundaries of Hancock County, first with the purchase of the Markleville Telephone Company in Madison County in October, 1965 and later with the purchase of the Cadiz Rural Telephone Cooperative in Henry County in February, 1967. Dial telephone service was established for all of HRTC's members by 1966 and in 1967, a new central office building was constructed in McCordsville along State Road 67 and corporate offices were built on County Road 600 North just east of State Road 9 – coincidentally on land it purchased from Hancock County REMC. New dial equipment was cut into service with Indianapolis Metro EAS service was also established at that time. The new office combines Maxwell, Mohawk and Willow Branch into one exchange. By 1967, the REMC had reached 3,000 members. Senator Vance Hartke announced the REA awarded the HRTC a grant of \$325,000 to finance extension of telephone service subscribers in Madison, Marion Hancock, Hamilton and Hendricks Counties.

Enough. I have told you everything that I know and somethings I don't. Talk to me at jskvarenina@hotmail.com or the Daily Reporter.

2019-07-12

By
Joe Skvarenina

Barb White writes from Carthage writes "I just read your column in the Reporter and I remember that time very well. My family lived in southwestern Rush County and my father planted a tomato patch for one of the Morristown Canneries. We had both German and Italian prisoners come to pick .Because of the tomato patch my little sisters and I would watch the fruit being harvested. Daddy said the Germans were dour and quiet, but the Italians seemed happy to be there. One day One the Italians brought my mother a special hamper of beautiful tomatoes and said they were 'for the' bambino'. Just one of many memories of World War II. My two brothers and older sister were in the service. D-Day brings lots of memories."

Many Hancock County residents served in WW II. For example Cecil Hackney served in North Africa and six other battles which included Sicily, Mandy, Norther France, Battle of the Bulge, the Rhineland, and Central Europe. According to one newspaper account,"he arrived for duty in Europe when he was 19 and stayed for three years, celebrating his 22nd birthday May 7, 1945, the day that Germany surrendered. "Hackney remembers the" Battle of the Bulge...the most vivid in his memory...I was a gunner in a tank with the 22nd Armored Division and a mortar came into the tank. It killed the commander and sent me to the hospital for four months. I lost 15-20 buddies in that battle." Hackney was awarded two purple hearts. Thanks to all the vets for their service.

One last thing congrats to the Mayor of Morristown for his recent Sagamore of the Wabash award. Bob Wortman really deserved it!

Enough. I have told you everything that I know and some things I don't. Talk to me at jskvarenina@hotmail.com or the Daily Reporter

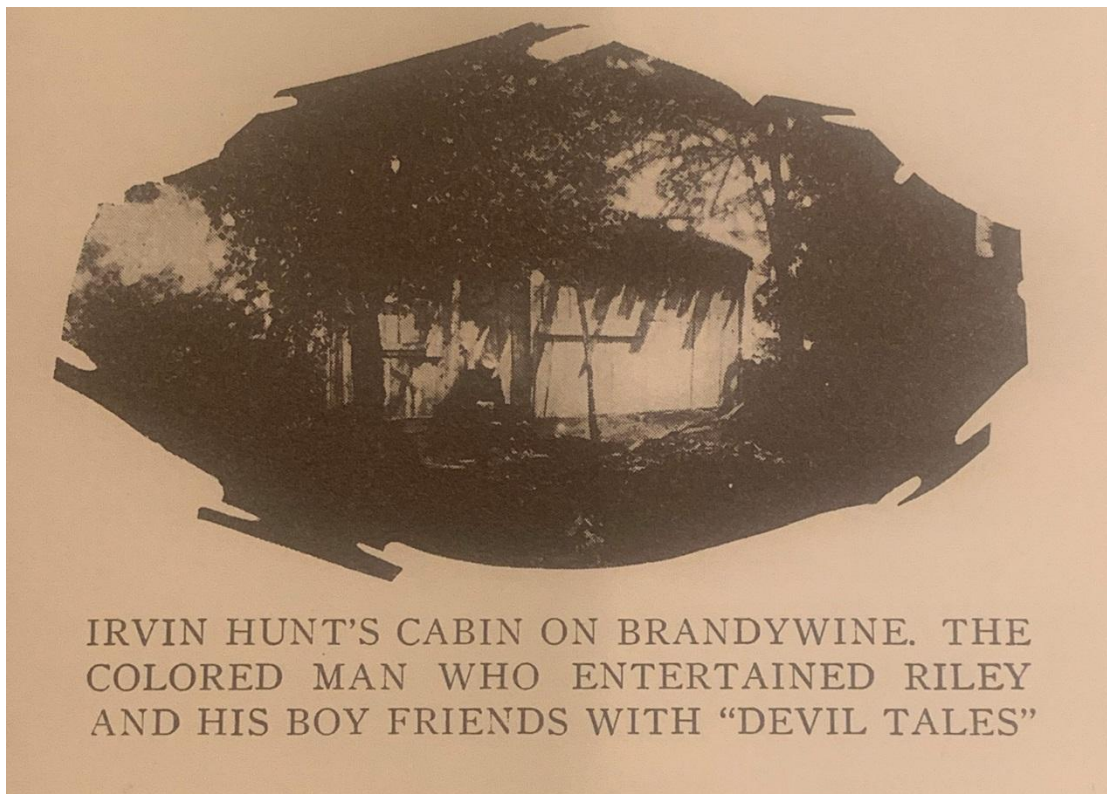
2019-07-05

By
Joe Skvarenina

The Richman History of Hancock County Indiana tells us that just east of Swope Streets stood the Morris Lineback property. In those days this was the last house in the corporate limits. The next home on the north side of the National Road east of the Brandywine which was spanned by a covered bridge. This house stood about a quarter of a mile north of the bridge was the home of Irvin Hunt the first (African American) in Greenfield. At Mr. Hunt's home was the location of one of the best springs known in the community for a number of years. In fact the spring was named Irvin spring by James Whitcomb Riley. In 1931 the Greenfield Federation of Women's Clubs constructed a well house and rock garden at the site of the Irving cabin. The well house and fountains was erected with the funds contribute by different clubs. The project committee for this endeavor included Miss Vernie Baldwin as Chairman, Mrs. Bruce Goble, Mrs. Bert Orr, Mrs. O.P. Eastes and Miss Kathryn Curry. The well house still in existence today was constructed of cracked stone and a red tile roof.

In 1915, Mr. Hunt was one of the 21 members of the reorganized 7th Day Adventist Church in Greenfield which in those days had a school with 10 pupils. Irvin would tell Riley and his friends ghost stories when they visited. I am sure that Hunt added a lot of local color to Riley's poetry.

Enough. I have told you everything that I know and some things I don't. Talk to me at jskvarenina@hotmail.com or the Daily Reporter.



2019-06-28

By
Joe Skvarenina

Tere Payne writes, "I was wondering if you have any information on Underground Railroad Stations in Blue River Township." That's an interesting question because of the nature of the Underground Railroad few people would have confessed to being part of the endeavor. I know if you find a Society of Friends or Quaker Congregation established around the 1840's you will probably have discovered a congregation which was involved with the Underground Railroad. I believe that the Milburn Home called Pineview in Brandywine Township was probably a stop on the Underground Railroad. Richard Milburn and wife arrived in Hancock County around 1835. Brandywine Township was sparsely settled at the time and the whole Hancock territory was unbroken wilderness in which numerous Indians wild deer, bears, snakes, wolves, owls, turkeys, opossums, raccoons, panthers and porcupines roamed at will. I believe that the Pineview has a hiding place behind the chimney for runaway slaves. If you go south of Charlottesville to the Carthage area you will find Walnut Ridge Friends Church which definitely had a basement area which was used as a hiding place for escaped slaves. In fact the church was burned by the Klan and rebuilt. Carthage is across the line from Blue River Township.

An old book by Thomas Newby called "Reminiscences of Pioneer Carthage" tell us there was a station at Rushville that took slaves to Carthage and then Knightstown. The goal was to reach Canada which forbid slavery. So more than likely places in Blue River Township did exist. Can anyone add to this?

Enough. I have told you everything that I know and some things I don't. Talk to me at jskvarenina@hotmail.com or at the Daily Reporter.

2019-06-21

By
Joe Skvarenina

Mark Smith, Carroll County Historian, writes us about the significance of James Whitcomb Riley in Carroll County. Early in his career Riley discovered Carroll County (Delphi Indiana). In 1883 he made friends in the towns of Camden and Delphi especially Dr. Wycliffe Smith. Riley made a number of appearances at the Opera House in Delphi because of his affection for the community. His first appearance was in 1882. The newspaper published a note saying, "our own Hoosier poet' will appear at the Delphi Opera House this was the most important entertainment venue in the community. On August 28, 1884 he did his first public reading of Fessler's Bees at the Delphi Opera House. Again in December 15, 1884, July 1885 he lectured at Delphi. In March of 1886 he appeared in the Opera house with the humorist, Bill Nye. According to the Carroll County Sesquicentennial Publication", the Hoosier poet visited. There often and next to Greenfield. His birthplace, no town or city in Indiana was closer to his heart than Delphi. He spent many hours in company with a Delphi physician who was a close friend, Dr. Wycliffe Smith, exploring the scenic hills and "creeks" in this county and legend has it that they moved him to some of his greatest works.'...On one occasion, when Riley accompanied Dr. Smith on a professional trip he was inspired to write the poem "From Delphi to Camden". Riley's other Carroll County poems included,, "The Boys", "A Poor man's Wealth," "The Beautiful City", "The Blossoms in the Trees", "Wet-Weather Talk," "Knee Deep in June," "Herr Weiser," "Grant," and "On the Banks O' Deer Crick".

On one trip to Delphi Riley came for the burial of Walter Whistler, a resident of Carroll County who was with the Greeley Expedition to the North Pole. There were rumors that he and others on the Polar Expedition had resorted to cannibalism. Dr. Smith found evidence that Whistler had been the victim of cannibalism. Dr. Smith died in a train accident.

Mark Smith, Carroll Historian, wants Hancock County Historical Society to be a sister historical Society with Carroll County. More later... Enough I have told you everything that I know and some things. I don't. Talk to me at jskvarenina@hotmail.com of the Daily Reporter



2019-06-14

Thomas Log Cabin

By

Joe Skvarenina

I know of several instances that folks have discovered the home that they live in was a log cabin and their current residence was built around the old log dwelling. I would encourage everyone to save those old log homes. Darrell and Nancy Thomas live in such a place in Vernon Township. The two story cabin (20 feet by 18 feet) was built sometime circe 1830-1850 of poplar and chestnut logs from the McCordsville area. The cabin was located in front of Thomas's new house which was built in 1991. There were no indications that the cabin had been moved and it rested on four large field stones. Sometime after the turn of the century a brick foundation was placed on the outer wall.

Darrell's great grandfather John S. Thomas, arrived on this farm in 1865 from Nicholas County Kentucky with Sarah, his wife, and five children. Grandfather John W. Thomas was born on the place in 1874 and lived there his entire 89 years or until 1964. Thomas's dad was always telling him that the brick farm house was a log cabin. The story told was when John S. got an extra \$50.00 he would build another room to the cabin so the farm house was much larger than the cabin. Renovation of the cabin began in 1997. The loft of the summer kitchen contained an old spinning wheel and a letter from Nickolas County Kentucky was found in the wall.

John S and Sarah are buried in the McCordsville Cemetery. Aunt Okla Thomas Whiteside was born in the downstairs bedroom along with her brothers Emmons, Cecil and Hervey "Doc". They were delivered by Doc Hervey of Fortville which is probably the origin of Dad's middle name. The viewing for Grandmother Izia Thomas was held there in 1931. Darrell's daughter Erin was married at the cabin in 2001. The original name of the farm was Maplecrest. The Thomas family plans for this historic property is to cherish the memories and save it.

Enough. I have told you everything that I know and some things I don't. Talk to me.

2019-06-07

By
Joe Skvarenina

Do you remember the Nazis of Morristown? Morristown Historian and Honorary Mayor Bob Wortman tells us, "to the people of the community prisoners of war came to Morristown, mostly German but a few Italians, as a means of relieving a manpower shortage." They came from Camp Atterbury around 1944. Atterbury was a very active army post at the time and it became a prisoner or war campground. Wortman who was too young for military service at the time remembers German laborers in the tomato fields at Morristown Canning Company and the Blue River Packing Company along US 52. Eventually they set up a camp on Paul Wolf's farm near the Ashbury Cemetery. Local school buses transferred the workers to the fields. Paul Wold who was Bill Wolf's father and Sarah Wolf's grandfather lived in Morristown and owned canning factories in Gwynneville, Arlington and New Palestine. The food that was being produced was used by the US Army. The prisoners often played soccer during work breaks and the residents would watch them play. If a ball was kicked to close to the fence the Germans wouldn't retrieve it because the armed guards. The Blue River Canning Company was behind the funeral home in town but has since burned down.

Paul Wolf wrote about the prisoners of war in one of his "Johnny letters" sent by American Legion Post 102 for American soldiers from the area. He described the Germans as good workers, ranging in age from 16 to 50 who really relieved a manpower shortage. Enough I have told you everything that I know and some things I don't. Talk to me at Jksvarenina@hotmail.com or the Daily Reporter.

2019-05-31

By
Joe Skvarenina

Suffragists

Lind Dunn has just written a book entitled "The Extraordinary Women of Hancock County: Suffragists and Trailblazers". Until the passage of the 19th Amendment to the Constitution ratified on August 18, 1920 women did not have the right to vote in Indiana. Voting was considered a state issue. The earliest state to enfranchise women was Wyoming in 1870. Hardly any states east of the Mississippi granted females the right to vote. But where were the suffragists in Greenfield? Dunn's book tells us, "On June 8, 1912, Dr. Armada Keller of Indianapolis addressed a group of women at the home of Mary Boyd in the hope they would join the effort. This was the first women's suffrage group in Greenfield." This group became known as the Women Franchise League which eventually in 1921 became the League of Women Voters. Dunn goes on to tell us the Richman History of Hancock County identifies details about the Women's Franchise League. In 1921 a League was formed with Ms. Emma Martin Chairman...eight members enrolled. A meeting was held but no much enthusiasm was manifested. In 1913 Mrs. Larimore elected Chairman ... membership increased to 18. In 1914 Mrs N. R. Rhue was elected Chairman. In 1919 Mrs. James Goble was elected Chairman of the Greenfield Franchise League. There are many famous Hancock County women.

Hazel Thompson was the first woman officer holder in Hancock County and she was elected in 1923 as Recorder. Nellie Baldwin served in WW I with the Red Cross overseas. Sister Margaret Baldwin was the first woman school administrator. Pat Elmore was the first woman mayor.

Linda Dunn has written a book which is really worth a look for those interested in Hancock County History. Enough I have told you everything that I know and some things I don't.

2019-05-24

By
Joe Skvarenina

Kathy Shoufler writes "Can you tell me when the Hancock Co Fair started, back even before it was held at the hospital land?" The first agricultural association was organized in June 1835 at the Courthouse. According to the Binford history of Hancock County an agricultural association was organized in 1856 for the purpose of conducting fairs. The first fair was held in Greenfield on the east side of town north of the National Road. In 1857 the fair was held on the south side of the railroad, east of the Brandywine Creek, on the land belonging to Samuel Milroy. A fire destroyed the floral hall and it was not rebuilt. The last fair at this site was held in 1879. On December 21, 1865 Boyd's Grove north of Greenfield, now the hospital property, was selected as a fairgrounds. When they built the hospital they found the foundations of the old cattle barn. Later to that the fair was held at the current site.

The first extension agent was Myron E. Cromer who went to work in 1918. At first, the extension office was on the top floor of the Courthouse. It was later moved to the Memorial Building. Cromer helped organize the Hancock County Farm Bureau. Before 1920 the Farm Bureau was organized in most townships. The goal of the Farm Bureau was to buy on manufacture goods in large quantities needed for farming at a savings. The Farm Bureau wanted to help farm families and it had social, educational and political goals. Cromer was credited in introducing the soy bean to Hancock County.

In 1840 corn was the largest crop in the county followed by wheat and oats. The livestock was sheep and cattle. In 1920's mechanized machinery took hold eventually replacing the horse.

Enough. I have told you everything that I know and some things I don't. Talk to me at jskvarenina@hotmail.com or the Daily Reporter.

2019-05-17

By Joseph Skvarenina

Barry Thomas writes, "On May 13th, 1949, an event was held at the Greenfield Airport to showcase the Willys Jeep, equipped with a Monroe Hydraulic Lift and Newgren implements. The Jeep, so equipped became a farm tractor. This event was one of several held across the Midwest. This is the only event that I have found that was covered by two newspaper articles. As a writer/researcher, I am looking for any additional information on this event. While it has been 70 years, I am hoping someone might have some relative or friend who could possibly have attended the demonstration. Any items such as photographs, literature, etc. would be extremely helpful."

Thomas goes on to tell us that the Jeep vehicle you see on the road today is a direct descendant of the post-WWII Willys Jeep first produced in late 1949. It was referred to as an "Universal" vehicle that could be used as a truck, a run-about (hauling passengers), a stationary power plant (powering various sort of tools from welders to air compressors) and of course as a tractor. The Monroe Auto Equipment Company is the same company that manufactures Monroe Shocks today. The Newgren Company was a supplier of farm implements but was out of business by 1952. While there is documentation on the first two companies, little is known about Newgren Equipment Company's organizational structure. The Daily Reporter article that details the company officials expected to be present at the event provides some interesting clues. Because Newgren was a privately held company there are no public financial reports listing such details. Any information on Newgren (perhaps someone used Newgren plows on the farm) would also be helpful in our research. Contact Barry Thomas barry@famjeep.com. Enough. I have told you everything that I know and some things I don't. Talk to me at jskvarenina@hotmail.com or the Daily Reporter.

2019-05-03

By
Joe Skvarenina

At the beginning of 1936, Hancock County residents in unserved areas were solicited to become members of the new electric cooperative. By March 16th, 968 people had become members. On April 21st the Articles of Incorporation were filed with the Secretary of State and the following day an application was filed with the Indiana Public Service Commission (now known as the Indiana Utility Regulatory Commission). The Articles of Incorporation were approved on May 22nd and the Hancock County REMC was officially created. The first pole was set November 1, 1936 on the Charles Brandle Farm in Vernon Township. First miles of line when energized were 325 miles. The first homes energized were on May 17, 1938 and the individuals energized were George Seal and Noble Watson. The number of homes energized were 815. The average price of electric bill when the co-op first began was \$3. Price for kWh of electricity when the co-op was first organized was for the first kWh 7.5 cents-for the next 30 –5 cents; next 170-3.0; All over 230-2.0 cents per kWh. The average members per mile when first energized were 2.4. The first headquarters were located at 12 West Main Street Greenfield.

Also, during 1936, President Franklin Roosevelt signed the Rural Electrification Act into law which established federal loans for purchasing and building rural power lines. Hancock County REMC applied for a loan on August 5th and on February 1, 1937 was approved for an initial loan of \$325,000.

Bids for line construction were let in April and during the summer months of 1937, 325 miles of electric lines were designed and plans for construction commenced. On May 12, 1938, the first seven miles of line was energized due west of Willow Branch. By the end of August, 1938, all 325 miles of line were energized, with 815 homes receiving power. Do you have stories of your farm receiving electricity tell me? I would like to hear them.

Enough. I have told you everything that I know and some things I don't. Talk to me at jskvarenina@hotmail.com or write the Daily Reporter.

2019-04-26

By
Joe Skvarenina

The idea of electric lights on Hancock County farms seemed a distant dream in 1934 when Hancock County Farm Bureau President John T. Wilson of Green Township first brought up the idea at a meeting. During the fall of that year, the Indiana Farm Bureau Cooperative Association led an initiative to establish the Indiana Rural Electric Act which was passed by the Indiana General Assembly in 1935. That law provided for a charter and franchise for cooperative corporations to provide electricity to unserved areas of the State.

On August 14, 1935, an organizational meeting of thirty-nine people from various Hancock County Townships was held at the Memorial Building in Greenfield to establish the Hancock County Rural Electric Membership Corporation. Fifteen incorporators signed the Articles of Incorporation and seven directors were elected to the Board: John T. Wilson, President (Green Township); Claude Grist, Vice President (Buck Creek Township); Russell Cushman, Secretary (Vernon Township); Frank L. Marsh, Treasurer (Center Township); W. Roy Hasler (Brown Township); L.H. Collins (Jackson Township); John S. Bentley (Blue River Township).

Do you remember or have been told stories about when electricity and telephone first came to your farm. What tales have been passed down in your family? Do remember the telephone party line. Don Shaw from Sulphur Springs remembers living in a house with no electricity or telephone. They heated the house with coal and used kerosene lamps. In 1942 they got electricity. Parents were farmers and lived through the depression. They brought electricity to the barn when Don was 7-8 years old. Prior to that they milked by hand and with electricity they could buy electric milkers. In 1946-47 they got water in the house and a bathroom." HREMC and Hancock Rural Telephone and now Ninestar made a real difference in standards of living in the county. Share some stories.

Enough. I have told you everything that I know and some things I don't. Talk to me at jskvarenina@hotmail.com or send a letter to the Daily Reporter.

2019-04-19

By
Joe Skvarenina

There is a lot of new business and industry coming to town that is creating a great job market. It is hoped that these folks will live in Hancock County. I hear conversations about the need for affordable housing in the community to house the new workers. Different generations have handled housing concerns in different ways.

Indiana Historical Landmarks tell us 180 Lustron homes still exist in Indiana. Lustron is a prefabricated steel house designed as an affordable solution to post WW II housing shortages. I do believe that there are two similar homes in Greenfield. One is located behind Bradford Builders and it was Dick Pickett's mother's house and the other is on south State Street on the east side of the road. These two homes might not be Lustron Homes but they are similar in manufacture, and are steel homes.

Another example would be the Holiday Park edition of 75 homes which is on the south side of McKenzie east of the Walgreen's. It was built in 1952 to accommodate the baby boomers. It was one of the first subdivisions in Hancock County. The post World War II and the growing numbers of commuters working in Anderson and Indianapolis hastened the need for more local housing.

Enough. I have told you everything that I know and some things I don't. Talk to me c/o jskvarenina @ hotmail .com or write the Daily Reporter.

2019-04-12

By
Joe Skvarenina

The other day Dave Gray, Hancock Public Library, came to the city council meeting to give his Annual Report on the library and the new facility in Sugar Creek Township. The New Palestine Branch for years survived as a volunteer library in a rented store front. The new digs is 15000 sq. ft. It is Geothermal and has three small study rooms, a large meeting room and a youth room . This facility will be opened Feb 11 and will be dedicated May 19. This facility was made possible by an estate gift by Dr. Rae and his wife Grace and is named after them.

In the summer of 1984 people in New Palestine people in the community expressed a need for a library. In 1985 a New Pal Library was established in the Mary M. Nichols building lower level. It was leased from the American Legion Post #182 for one dollar a year. In 1985 the library secured a \$10,000 loan from the New Palestine Bank. A purchase of 10,000 titles was made from the Indianapolis Public School system for about \$500. By 1987 the facility was ready to open. Phyllis Arthur granddaughter of Mary M. Nichols cutting the ribbon. The Mary M. Nichols Library building was built around the turn of the 19th century. The two story brick building currently the museum replaced a small frame building. Henry C. and Sarah Nichols built the current building. He was the son of the Rev. William Nichols. Nichols operated a general store at the site. In 1910 Ellsworth Phares used the building for several years. He sold furniture, stoves, dry goods and groceries. It was also the site of the Post Office. John Ashcraft had a store there in 1934. Mary Nichols had given the building to the American Legion #182 to use as long as it existed.

Enough. I have told you everything that I know and some things I don't. Talk to me at jskvarenina@hotmail.com or write the Daily Reporter.

2019-04-05

By
Joe Skvarenina

I had the opportunity to attend the Greenfield Fire Territory Awards banquet not so long ago. Shawn Booker from the department had called and he was developing a history which was presented during the evening. Here is some of it.

On November 17, 2019 the department will be 125 years old. The Greenfield Fire Department was organized officially on the 17th of November, 1894.

On March 20, 1880, several citizens met at the Court House to organize a Hook and Ladder Brigade for protection against fire. It was organized with 31 members. The members were E.P. Thayer, Harry Hunt, Tom Randal, Tom Selman, E B. Howard, Rader Boyd, C.T. Cochran, S.E. Duncan, Tom Carr, John Tindal, Sam Spangler, John Flippo, Fred Beecher, Wm. Webb and Joseph Baldwin. A wagon with ladders was purchased, which the firemen pulling it. After the Water Works Plant had been installed in 1894, a hose wagon was purchased. This was kept at Kinder's Livery Barn, until the City Building was built in 1895 at a cost of \$2791 by W.H. Powers. The City Building on North Street then housed the Fire Department and the City Council Chambers. On December 7, 1894, a Fire Department was organized consisting of 20 men. Some of the members included: E.B. Howard, Clint Parker, Allen Cooper, Austin Boots, Charles Huston, W.A. Hughes, John Abbott, George Gant, Taylor Morford, John Walsh and Elmer Jeffries. The City Council purchased a Mocking Bird Whistle at the pumping station, and also bought 12 rubber hats and coats. The Mocking Bird Whistle was sounded first on December 31 at twelve P.M. Very few heard it except those in the immediate vicinity. Some said it sounded like a small dog howling, others said it made a noise like the wind blowing thru the whiskers of a councilman. It proved unsatisfactory and was taken out. Two or three years later a team of horses was bought to pull the hose wagon. Old Tom first drove the Hook and Ladder wagon. Fred Sitton took over driving the horses on June 27, 1905 and drove until the first truck was bought in 1917. In 1916 the members of the department were Fred Sitton, Chief Jim Moran, Earl Jackson, Robert Fair, Wm. Sitton, Chas. Duncan, John Young, James Walsh, Frank Hafner, Chas. Huston, Johnson Abbott, Chas. Eastes and Guy Richey.

Until the time the City Directory was published in 1897, the largest fire had been on December 15, 1895, at the S.R. Wells Window Glass Works. Due to the heroic work done by the fire department, Mr. Wells opened his heart and pocketbook and donated \$150.00 to the department. The first annual meeting and supper was held on December 7, 1895 and the second on December 7, 1896. As evidence to this fact, there are two breast bones of turkeys were nailed above the driver's seat over the wagon seat.

Thanks Shawn. Enough. I have told you everything that I know and some things I don't talk to me at Jskvarenina@hotmail.com or write the Daily Reporter.

2019-03-29

By
Joe Skvarenina

The Binford History of Hancock County shares with us information about early fires in Greenfield. In 1839 the fire in Greenfield destroyed all the business portion on the north side of Main Street between the tavern, located about where the Guymon house stood (now an empty parking lot), and State Street. Several businessmen lost all their stock, A.T. Hart being one of them.

Previous to the building of the Walker corner, Joseph Chapman erected a three story frame hotel (or tavern, as such buildings then were called) on the corner now occupied by the Walker block (the old Masonic Building) in which Elijah Knight was keeping tavern and controlling a large frame stable, both of which burned and about about 15 houses were lost.

In 1857 another frightful fire raged in the town, destroying all the buildings between Dr. Howards' residence (the yarn shop) and the Walker Corner. Among the other fires from time to time the Binford History notes the complete destruction thereby of two planning mills, three flouring mills, one extensive pump factory, a woolen factory, a ware-house, a stable containing four horses, and several dwellings of more or less value.

The Binford History of Hancock County adds somewhat prophetically, "It will seem that Greenfield has had a full share of fires for the time, sufficient at least to give her liberal citizens a reason-able warning to provide ample protection. Greenfield today is UN-prepared for a big fire like some that visited her in the past and is liable at any time to sustain a loss many times greater than the cost of an engine, a cistern, and other means of protection, but we trust that she will not be 'Penny Wise-and Pound Foolish' always. History is of little practical use save as it teaches us lessons for the future, and judging from past history of our county seat, we can't be too careful."

I am sure all of you can remember the fire at Annie's and the New Building both historical structures which were completely lost. Be sure to thank a fireman. Enough. I have told you everything that I know and some things I don't. Talk to me at jskvarenina@hotmail.com or write the Daily Reporter.

2019-03-22

By
Joe Skvarenina

Mike Rooney writes, "I have an interest in history of Greenfield. I am looking for information about where the stove manufacturer was located in Greenfield, and if anyone has pictures. I believe it was the D. Root & Company. This would have been around 1870." Developments like the stove factory would naturally be tied to the Gas Boom period in town, a period of great growth for the community. In the late 1800's Greenfield had two window glass factories, one fruit jar factory, one bottle factory, one rolling and nail mill, one gas engine shop, three printing and binding plants, one saw mill, one ice cream factory, and several brick yards on the edge of town. One brick yard was located at the current Hawks Tail Golf Club. One planing mill and fruit jar company were located on the west end of town. Owens Glass was located at the present west side Hardees. Most of these factories were located in the south end of town around the railroad depot. Most of these industries located in Greenfield for the free gas. In 1887 Greenfield had a Board of Trade that attempted to regulate the gas use saving some for residential home owners. The town also had two commercial clubs much like today's Greenfield Chamber of Commerce which promoted business coming to Greenfield. I found one reference to a stove company, the Home Stove Company moved to town in 1894. If you can help by providing more information it would be appreciated, photographs or whatever!

Some tell me that the mounds at the Golf Course are brick slag from the old brick yard. Others tell me that every time you dig at the Hardees on west side you find glass from the bottle company. Also at the top of the hill on Route 40 and Apple Street was once called straw board hill because the waste paper from the paper mill which was discharged in the creek.

Enough. I have told you everything that I know and some things I don't. Talk to me at jskvarenina@hotmail.com or at the Reporter

2018-01-18

by
Joe Skvarenina

Do you remember the party line on your telephone? Even had certain number of rings if the call was for you but you also could pick up the phone and listen to other persons conversations. I remember it. Telephone service has come a long way. Olive Deshong Duncan operated the telephone exchange in Mohawk in 1929. She was 18 years old. In 1934 Olive married Ralph Duncan and they resided at the telephone exchange. She was paid \$40 a month. On February 7, 1942 Grace Brinker started working and living in the exchange. Grace's daughter started, Ella Marie, helped at the switch board. The Mohawk exchange eventually became part of the Hancock County Rural Telephone, Ninestar today. Telephone service has sure come along way.

Five small telephone companies joined together to form the Hancock County Rural Telephone Company in 1950. These companies included the McCordsville Telephone Company, the Maxwell Telephone Company, the Mohawk Telephone Company, the New Eden Telephone Company, and the Willow Branch Telephone Company. Originally the telephone lines were strung along the fence line. The McCordsville Company was started in 1895 by Loren Helms, a telephone factory worker. He strung a wire along his mother's back fence to his sister's. Mrs. Charles Peal home , and installed the first telephone in the community. Five neighbors joined the line and soon the company was in business. The other four companies were established between 1900 and 1903. In 1967 the Hancock Rural telephone Company purchased the Cadiz Rural Telephone Company in Henry County. In 1979 Hancock Rural Telephone purchased Sulphur Springs. Hancock Rural Telephone Corporation had access lines Hancock, Henry, Madison, Marion and Hamilton Counties with exchanges in Maxwell, Markleville and McCordsville.

I had the opportunity to talk with Dan O'Connor the other day and he was the Executive Vice President of the group. Dan is well known in telephone circles throughout the state. Do you have anything to contribute to the development of rural telephone service?

Enough. I have told you everything that I know and some things I don't. Talk to me at jskvarenina@hotmail.com or the Daily Reporter.

2019-01-11

By Joe Skvarenina

Mark Brown writes "While researching family and Fortville photos, I ran across some articles that you wrote. I run a Facebook page called Fortville History & Memories and I'm trying to collect as many old photos of Fortville as I can. I have found quite a few photos on the internet, but most are poorly scanned and I was hoping to get access to some original photos that I could re scan.

I saw that you published a book of Hancock County postcards and I certainly don't want to infringe on your book or copyrights. But I was hoping you might be able to direct me to potentially untapped resources or other people that might be able to help?"

Can any of you help with photos for Marks site?

For many years before the present town of Fortville was laid out, a post office and a store was located a mile north and a little west of the present town known as Phoebe Fort's Corner. The post office was named Walpole in honor of Thomas D. Walpole a politician in Greenfield. On February 12, 1849 Mr. Cephas Fort made the original survey of 33 lots on land he owned along the Flat Rock. On September 30, 1865, a petition was presented to change the name of the town from Walpole to Fortville and to incorporate it. An election was held, 36 votes in favor and 19 were opposed. Before natural gas was discovered in 1887 the Fortville streets were lit by coal-oil burning lamps placed on the street corners. In April 1913 electric street lights were installed. In the spring of 1915 efforts were made to establish a public library and reading room. In 1917 the building of a Carnegie Library began and it was completed in 1918. The building is still in existence today. In the 1950's tomatoes were an important crop in Vernon Township. There was a Fortville Canning Factory available for the farmers to bring in their crop. Fortville was also in the middle of a rich grain growing center and became an important trading center. William Jennings Bryan, the Great Commoner, a democrat, campaigned for President in the Fortville community. In 1912 the Red Men's Lodge finding out that Dr McCord an active lodge member was helping a woman with child at a camp of Mexican Gypsies help fed the entire group. The Red Man's Lodge building eventually became the International Order of the Odd Fellows (IOOF) building. There was also a Masonic and Knights of Pythias Hall in town. The first lodge burned on December 31, 1893 and the second building was dedicated on April 12, 1902. Enough. I have told you thing that I know and some things I don't. Talk to me at jskvarenina@hotmail.com or the Daily Reporter.

**See page 50 of Postcard book for picture of Fortville Canning Factory

2019-01-04

By Joe Skvarenina

Tony Dillion writes, "Yes, very familiar with the County Line Bridge! It was a joint venture between the Burk Construction Company (Contractor) and the Pan American Bridge Company who was subcontracted to fabricate the trusses. My close friend and historian Jim Cooper wrote a wonderful paper about this bridge in preparation for its National Register listing. I visited it again earlier this year and was delighted to see it had been recently repainted, it's now Red where it has previously been Orange. I'm hoping the Hays Bridge will soon get a new coat of paint and would honestly like to see it painted a brighter color... I never have liked that "Tank White" color they picked! I have inspection photos of it with the primer coat that was a dark Red and I thought it looked great. Many of these old spans were originally painted bright colors in their heyday. Tony talks about Bridge #105 built 1916 which on the Hancock and Rush County lines. It is one of two steel bridges still in existence in the county with the other being Cry Baby Bridge.

One of the best person to talk about history is Bob Wortman, Mayor of Morristown. Wortman is the President of Fountaintown Gas which isn't in Fountaintown but Morristown. His gas company serves Carthage, Finly, Flat Rock, Fountaintown, Freeport, Gwynneville, Marietta, Middleton, Morristown, Mt. Auburn, St Paul, Shirley, Sulphur Springs, Waldron and Wilkinson. His business is a successor to the old Citizens Gas Company which was founded in the 1900's and didn't have enough wells for heating. Bob remembers the skating arena which was in the empty lot next to the abandon restaurant in Fountaintown. Also the Moonlight Outdoor theater which was on the corner of State Route 9 and State Route 52? Do you remember in 1949 when Greenfield set up a tent for skating in Riley Park? Also did you know that Edgar Moore's parents ran a restaurant at the location of Todd's Barber Shop? What do you know about the Kaiser Grocery?

Riley Park Tire was at one time an Interurban Garage. The tracks are still inside the old section of the building. Jim Helgason tells me at one time it was an ammo storage depot with a guard shack at the front. I looking on more information on the Riley Park building let me know if you have some!

Enough. I have told you anything that I know and some things I don't. Talk to me at jskvarenina@hotmail.com or the Daily Reporter.

2018-12-28

by
Joe Skvarenina

Annually around Veterans Day the Greater Greenfield Chamber of Commerce and the Hancock Public Library co-sponsor the annual veteran recognition luncheon. This year it was at Ninestar. Hancock County has been blessed with several active American Legion posts. I know posts are located in Fortville, New Palestine, Charlottesville and were founded between 1919-1921. American Legion Post #119 in Greenfield was organized 1921 in a ceremony with the GAR (Grand Army of the Republic) veterans group of Civil War Days. Over the years Post#119 organized baseball teams, a drum and bugle corps founded in 1931 and a drill team to preserve the relationships and associations of former military members. In the early years after WWI Legion life centered around the Memorial Building. The Memorial Building was built because Hancock County wanted to honor the men who fought during the war. So the county government decided to build the Memorial Building with meeting rooms and a gym as an asset to the community. They believed the dedication of the building to those who served overseas would properly honor their service. Roughly 840 people from Hancock County served in WWI. Other American Legion Posts met in various locations in their communities. In New Palestine was located in the Phares Building now the New Palestine Museum which was donated to the American Legion by Mary Nichols.

People felt a need to join close associations during the 1920's. Fraternal organizations, literary societies and clubs became very important to the community. Greenfield groups included the Knight of Pythias, Odd Fellows, Knights Templar, Masons, Modern Woodman, Eagles, Moose, Red Man, and unfortunately the Klu Klux Klan. In most cases these groups had women ancillaries. The Klan was against African American, emigrants, Irish and Catholics. Large Klan rallies were held in Greenfield.

Enough. I have told you everything that I know and some things I don't. Talk to me at jskvarenina@hotmail.com or the Daily Reporter.



2018-12-21

By Joe Skvarenina

Jennifer Thompson tells, "I started reading your book last week, Civil War Era in Hancock County" and I read about Oliver P. Gooding writing the song America. That piqued my curiosity, so I wanted to learn more about that song. I found the words in his book and I also found a copy of the sheet music from the Library of Congress. Here is the link to the sheet music in case you have not seen it.

<https://www.loc.gov/resource/sm1882.19217.0/?sp=1>.

Oliver P. Gooding was Hancock County's only Civil War General. Born January 19, 1835 in Moscow Indiana (Rush County) and he moved to Greenfield in 1837. He graduated from West Point in 1858 at 18 years of age. He served in expeditions against the Mormons in 1859-1860.

He commanded the 6th Massachusetts Cavalry which he led during the battle of New Orleans. He also served at Teche and Post Harrison Campaigns. In 1864 he commanded the Fifth Brigade Calvary Division, Department of the Gulf and at the end he was designated commander of the Division. General Gooding commanded Union Troops at Campti on the North Bank of the Red River at which he defeated General Siddell. During this battle his command suffered heavy loss of life and its success was greater than the rest of the Union Army. At Port Hudson he led his brigade on two bloody assaults on May 27 and June 14th against heavy enemy works.

On April 4, 1864 at the Battle of Pleasant Hill Louisiana he held the enemy in check until the rest of the Union Army column could come into position. During the Battle of Kane River Crossing he commanded the Advance Calvary and he was complimented on how he handled his command which was constantly under fire. He entered the war as a second Lieutenant and rose to the rank of Major General by Brevet of the United States Volunteers.

Gooding reentered civilian life in Washington D.C. and resumed the study of law. He was admitted to the bar in 1866 and practiced until 1869 in Washington D.C. After that General Gooding retired and returned to Greenfield which he considered his home town. Later he relocated to Missouri and became the Attorney General of the State Insurance Department in 1881. He's Hancock County's own Civil War General and should enjoy some acclaim.

Enough I have told you everything that I know and some things I don't. Talk to me at jskvarenina@hotmail.com or call the Daily Reporter.

2018-12-14

By
Joe Skvarenina.

Brenda Madison writes, "We moved to Indiana less than a year ago, and I am curious about a lot of things, including:

1. In yesterday's "Daily Reporter", you wrote about the Brandywine Ford in Riley Park. When we were there a few months ago, a gentleman told us that the ford had been closed many years ago after someone drowned trying to cross it. Is that correct, and if so, would you share the details?
2. We love the old brick school houses from the late 1800s through early 1900s, many of which have been converted to houses. Would you please tell me a bit about them?
3. What are the concrete pillars that we frequently see along the sides of roadways? I am assuming they are property markers (some look as if they have had fencing actually attached to them at some point), but they seem pretty massive just to mark property lines."

Ok Brenda, to my knowledge no one was killed at the ford through the Brandywine Creek in Riley Park. Does anyone know any different? Joe Copeland former County Engineer tells those posts you wonder about are probably corner posts on property lines. The last one room, school house was the Ada New School in east Greenfield. It was abandoned in 1947. In 1959 the Indiana School Organization Act required all districts have 1000 students. Thus the death of the one room school district. A committee of local citizens drew the lines. Jackson, Brown and Blue River Townships were in the Eastern District; Green and Center Townships were in the Greenfield Central District. Sugar Creek and Brandywine were in the Southern Hancock School Corporation. Buck Creek and Vernon were in the Mount Vernon School system.

It is interesting to note that Hancock County voted against free schools in 1848 and 1849. But they did vote for the 1851 Indiana Constitution which had free public schools provisions in it. It is also interesting to note in 1915 there were 30 one room school houses still in operation. By that time Blue River Township was the only township to consolidate their schools.

Enough. I have told you everything that I know and some things I don't. Talk to me at jskvarenina@hotmail.com or the Daily Reporter.

2018-12-07

By
Joe Skvarenina

I heard on the Radio the other day that October marked 42 anniversary of the Vietnam War. Thanks to all that served in this conflict. The Hancock County Vietnam Veterans Memorial located at the corner State road and 100 South or Davis Road. It was dedicated in 1991 and is in the section of the Hancock County Bicentennial Park. A "of 12 popular trees has a fine granite stone at its vortex, with a transcription stating, "In grateful remembrance to those who served and those who gallantly gave their lives in Vietnam."

The Vietnam heroes who gave their lives included Sgt Norris R Borgman, PFC Vaughn L. Brown, Cpl. Michael L. Ebert, Spec4 Roger D Haste, Pfc. John L. Modglin, Pfc. Michael D. Terry, Hn. William M. Brees, Jr., Spec4. Mark G. Draper, PFC Elvin W. Gose, Lcpl. Frank W. Marks, HN. Huger L. Phelps and Lt. Robert H. Harlan II. LT. Max Shafer body was never recovered. Every year on Memorial Day the Greenfield Rotarian's place a cross for each on the court house lawn. Also Company D. of the 151st Infantry from the Greenfield Armory was called up by Lyndon Johnson to serve in Vietnam. But the old Greenfield Rangers no longer exist. It was disbanded after they returned and have been replaced by the current signal company. From this company Spec4 Charles Larkin and SGT. Robert Smith lost their lives in Vietnam.

Go see the memorial. Enough. I have told you everything that I know and some things I don't. Talk to at jskvarenina@hotmail.com or the Daily Reporter. Thank a vet.

2018-11-30

By
Joe Skvarenina

Mt. Comfort High School

The three year program began in Mt. Comfort in 1903. The oldest record lists Joseph A. Land as the first enrolled. April 10, 1906 Harvey Griffey certified Land's record along with Nettie Sanford. The next three year graduating class lists Allen Eastes, Floyd Parker, Roscoe Hurley and Nettie Sanford. In 1908 Harvey Griffey certified Jesse N Snider as a graduate. In 1909 Beryl Eastes, Pearl King, Edith Keller, Frank Newman, and Flossie Hurley graduated. During the summer the school was given accredited for a four year program and the class returned and graduating again in 1910. Harvey Griffey was principal from 1906 to 1909. The first graduating class for which four year records were kept was for the class of 1911. The graduates were Lenna Byers, Elbert Griffin, Hazel Shelby, Ethel Snider and Victor Stoner. The ceremony was held April 7, 1911. There were two high school teachers, They taught English, Geometry, Algebra, Latin, Ancient, Medieval, American History, Business Arithmetic, Commercial and Physical Geography and rudimentary Physics and Botany. Two teachers taught 7 or 8 classes a day. The first basketball team from the Mt. Comfort High School practiced in a vacant room upstairs. Basketball hoops were fastened to the north and south walls. Later the team played outdoors under principal and coach Arthur V. Doub. In 1908 they played Cumberland, Oaklandon and McCordsville. In the 1918 building there was a gymnasium.

The remaining section of the 1918 school was demolished with the recent improvements. On the inside of the current school is an old Mt. Comfort high School Band uniform preserved in a glass case. My wife's father, aunt, and sister graduated from Mt. Comfort School. Enough I have told you everything that I know and some things I don't. Talk to me at jskvarenina@hotmail.com or the Daily Reporter

2018-11-23

By
Joe Skvarenina

The county's Memorial Building is located at the corner of North and East Street's in Greenfield. At one time a poultry yard was at the location. I have seen plans for putting in an elevator at the site. That's a good idea because of the buildings use by many local groups including the veterans. The Memorial building was dedicated September 30, 1923. Inside the building is a plaque which recognizes the Woodrow Wilson and the WW I veterans of this county who gave the supreme sacrifice. Originally the second floor was devoted for use by the American Legion and Auxiliary. The ground floor was used for agricultural lectures. Taylor Morford, Civil war veteran and a member of the GAR (Grand Army of the Republic) laid the cornerstone. For a long time there were WW I cannons as war trophies were on the front lawn.(You can still see the concrete pads that the cannon rested upon in the lawn). One was a large Austrian howitzer and the other a small German field piece. On October 16, 1942 they were removed from the Memorial Building to be used a scrap to mold into new weapons for WW II. For years the Memorial Building was the center of Veterans Activities in the community. Also many local high school basketball games were played at the site. Jerry Ramsey tells that the gym at the Memorial Building was the home gym for Eden school. His dad told him the the east basket has a dead spot. Anybody else find this to be true?

Enough. I have told you everything that I know and some things I don't. Talk to me at Jksvarenina@hotmail.com or at the Daily Reporter.

2018-11-16

By
Joe Skvarenina

Candy Atkins writes, "Years ago I spoke to Ward Duncan. His family had my house before my grandparents did. He was kind enough to share an old photo and lots of information." The house is on Median and several people believe that it was part of the Underground Railroad. I understand that there was a secret room in the basement to hide runaway slaves. This is now the furnace room. Hancock county was a Quaker area at one time and I always wondered about possible UGRR (Underground Railroad) activities in county since the Quakers were so active in helping the slaves flee from captivity. I also believe that Pineview built circa 1829 in Brandywine Township was another stop on the UGRR. The house constructed by Richard Milburn has a room hidden behind the fireplace. Not much is available about UGRR sites because at the time it was a closely held secret.

A Society of Friends (Quaker) publication helps us define the UGRR. The Underground Railroad has to do with the effort of helping slaves escape. Multiple incidences have been written about escaping slaves who seem to have vanished in one area only to have surfaced in a distant place. The slave captors were referred to as bloodhounds. Workers helping the slaves escape were referred to as agents or conductors. Safe houses were called stations or depots. Forms of transportation for the slaves were called locomotives. The routes of escape were called tracks. So the UGRR had its own coded language. What do you know about the UGRR?

Enough. I have told you everything that I know and some things I don't. Talk to me @jskvarenina@hotmail.com or the Daily Reporter

2018-11-09

By
Joe Skvarenina

I did presentation at the Indianapolis Civil War round table the other day and I met Jennifer Thompson who has done a wonderful four volume set on the history of the Bloody Eighth Volunteer Regiment. Lincoln called for troop and Indiana quota was 4,000 plus but 12,000 enlisted. Reuben Riley and Henry Snow went to the various communities in Hancock County with a fife and drum corp to build enthusiasm and the result was Company G of the Eighth. Other companies were formed in Henry, Randolph, Madison, Wabash, Grant and three in Wayne Counties. When these men were mustered out a reception for the troops was held in Pierson's Grove south west of Greenfield, West of Pennsylvania Street. This was on August 5.

Soldier Samuel Dunbar sent letters to the Hancock County Democrat from the front which were published in the newspaper. Eventually the Greenfield GAR Post was named for Dunbar. Dunbar died and was buried on the bank of a bayou in Louisiana and later was brought home and buried in Park Cemetery. Another veteran was Samuel Shelby died in Jan. 30, 1936 and was the last Civil War Veteran of the Samuel H. Dunbar Grand Army of the Republic Post (GAR). I will leave Jennifer's book in the history room for those doing family research they might be handy. Many interesting veteran bios.

In the Eight Indiana Regiment 784 were mustered out, They lost seven men by death(four killed or mortally wounded and three by disease), fifteen by desertion and one man married. Enough I have told you everything that I know and some things I don't. Talk to me.

2018-11-02

By
Joe Skvarenina

Tony Dillon writes" I work with historic bridge preservation in Indiana. I was also an inspector on the 2006 rehab. of the Hays Bridge over Sugar Creek. During this time I had the chance to do a little research on other bridges that once existed in the county. Of special interest was the Duncan Bridge, that like the Hays Bridge was designed by former Greenfield engineer Winfield Fries. The blueprints for this bridge are hanging in the Hancock County Highway Department. I believe it crossed Sugar Creek on County Road 200 West just NE of Philadelphia. If this is the correct location it was replaced in 1970. After a nearly 12 year absence I am once again looking for a photo of this bridge, but so far have had no luck. The design is very similar to the Hays Bridge, but the Duncan Bridge was somewhat longer and also was skewed... Something that was very uncommon in an 1880's iron truss span. I'm also looking for a picture of the Murphin Bridge, but this one is a bit more mysterious. Also a Winfield Fries design, it was actually identical to the Hays Bridge. And when I say identical... I actually have a copy of the blueprint that was used for both and Murphin was crossed out with Hays written above it. I looked at some historic maps and found the Murphin name near another Sugar Creek crossing (I counted 40 roads in the county crossing Sugar Creek... Not including the two I-70 spans). I can't remember the location but it might have been County Road 900 North. Many of the Sugar Creek crossings were replaced in the late 60's and early to mid 1970's. I started studying them in 1978 when I was 13 years old. I'm from New Castle and Henry County also had numerous metal trusses (Many of which were built by New Castle Bridge Co./Pan American Bridge Co./Burk Construction Co. ALL of New Castle). Unfortunately when I moved back from Florida in 1993 the last two through trusses were being demolished. If you have come across any photos of the Duncan or Murphin Bridges, I would appreciate if you would share or direct me to them. I would also enjoy any other old bridge photos that might exist." If you can answer Tony, please do so.

On 900 East on the Rush/Hancock County line is Iron Bridge #105 over the Blue River. It still exists and was built in 1916. On April 11, 1916 the County Councils of two counties met on the bank of the Blue River to jointly opened the bids for the construction of the new span. After some discussion the summit decided to build a steel bridge and the firm selected was the Burk Constitutions Company of New Castle. The cost would be \$11,000. Bridge design wasn't standardized in those days. The bridge is one the first all riveted bridges in the state. There is a horse shoe for luck at one end.

Enough. I have told you everything that I know and some things I don't. Talk to me.

2018-10-26

By
Joe Skvarenina

Through the turn of the century several businesses and a large number of industrial operations flourished in Shirley. There was a chemical works that moved from Pennsylvania. Indiana Bottle Company, Banner Glass Company, Seven Hosek Brothers Lamp and Chimney Factory, Baker Glass Company, Shirley, and Shirley Creosote Company. Radiator and Foundry and the Shirley Water Plant was built in 1912. The community continued to attract businesses through the years including general stores, printing plants, hardware, banks, hotels, a lumberyard, doctors, lawyers and a pharmacy. The loss industry was a result of the decline of the availability of natural gas, or end of the gas boom. In later years it was the loss of the railroads. At one time 10,000 people came to work in Shirley.

The Shirley community was named for a Mr. Shirley a conductor of the railroad which ran north-south through the area. In 1890 the east-west rail line was constructed from Indianapolis to Lynn and the stage was set for the development of the town. In 1891 the first telegraph office was opened in Shirley. John White developed out lots, built a store, and John Larimore built the first residence. Larimore became Shirley's first postmaster at about the same time.

Sheriff Malcolm E. Grass was a resident of Shirley. There is a pocket park in his honor. A memorial is at the site of the old Water Tower. Grass served two terms as Hancock County Sheriff and he was with the Sheriff's Department for a period of 14 years. He served 8 years as Deputy Marshall of Shirley and was an 18 years veteran of the Shirley Fire Department. His fatal shooting in the line of duty was May 8, 1986. The memorial was dedicated November 1, 1987 with 300 people in attendance.

Enough. I have told everything that I know and some things I don't. Talk to me at jskvarenina@hotmail.com or at the Daily Reporter

2018-10-19

By
Joe Skvarenina

Do you remember the ford in the Brandywine at Riley Park?

In 1926 the only means of travel by motor car from one side of Riley park to the other was by Route 40. There was no way across the Brandywine Creek. The Park Board considered building a bridge as a convenience for Park visitors. Dr. Joseph Allen a Park Board member appealed for a ford to across the Brandywine thus keeping with the Park's natural beauty. American Legion Post #119 asked permission of the Park Board to build the ford. The Park Board would provide the cement and gravel and the Legion the work force. Legion Commander Wood marshaled his forces of local veterans to build the ford across the Brandywine. The Post #119 boys showed up with picks, shovels and spades and went to work. Soon the mud and slush were moving, in an hour or so the ford builders were in the mud and water to their knees. One Legionnaire said the mud reminded him of France during WW I. After about three hours their efforts began to wane to almost zero. Here in the mud, the mental attitude of former days in the Army to contrive ways and means to avoid excessive labor activity came to the fore front. Legionnaire and Surveyor Donald B. Thomas, 'Let's let this job out by contract, the Legion pay the bill, then all the Legionnaires will have a part in the project.'

Some times along the weary walks of life, we make a good beginnings but a poor endings. The ford was constructed by Legionaries not by contract but by contract. This story was provided to me by good friend Sue Baker, a fine historian and friend. I am sure her father Horace Edwards was an Legionnaire.

Enough. I have told you everything that I know and some things I don't. Talk to me.

2018-10-12

by
Joe Skvarenina

Did you ever go to a Flea Market or Auction and see items you had as a kid being sold as a collectible. It just couldn't have been that long ago and it freaks me out. I am sure that Buffalo Bob, Gene Autry, or Hop Long Cassidy are still around! I might still have my Roy Rogers six gun.

Jane Haines Foster shares with us a few Greenfield memories that some of us who's childhood did span the 1940's and 1950's can relate. Jane tells, " Why we would ride out bikes hither and yon from one end of town to another. We would go to Riley Park to roll down the hills, play on the playground, wade in the ford dodging crawdads near the Ole Swimmin Hole and stop for penny candy on our way home at Shorty Bodkins...Many elderly neighbors were sitting on their porch swings spying on all the nooks and crannies in the alleys which made it difficult to play hooky. They cared for us children in' fond and dear ways'. Mother would take me to Dr. Arnold's on State and Main Street after swabbing my throat with a wooden stick he would give mother a nickle to buy me ice cream at Early's Drug Store. D. Arnold would make early evening house calls and he would ask 'What's for supper?' and not charge for the visit...Bible School was held for 2 weeks in June at the Bradley Methodist Church. Mrs. Lette B. Clift was proudly in charge in charge, opening each session with 'Holy', 'Holy', 'Holy'. I always wondered why she rocked back and forth on her tiptoes as she sangs the song since she was so much taller than us kind and could see over our heads anyway? Most of us gave a 2 cents offering every day which was tied into the corner of my handkerchief..." Jane Thanks for the blast from the past.

Did your bike have streamers on the handlebars and a bell? Enough. I have told you every thing that I know and some things I don't. Talk to me.

2018-10-05

By
Joe Skvarenina

Lizabuth Ann's Kitchen

Are you enjoying Riley Days? As you have probably heard we are working on raising money to fund the construction of a new multi use facility behind the museum. It will be an area which will accommodate 50 people , double our current capacity, as well as increase our public rest rooms. It's called lizabuth Ann's Kitchen and it will offer year-round climate controlled shelter to school, tour, social; and corporate groups who visit the James Whitcomb Riley Boyhood Home and Museum. It will double our current capacity and provide ample space for corporate meetings or seminars. We are looking for contributions and would welcome any and all assistance. The Riley Old Home Society is a 501 c(3) and all contributions are deductible as allowed by law.

But who is Lizabuth Ann? She was a real person or a composite person who worked in the Riley household. Though we may not have a full name like Mary Alice Smith we know that Lizabuth Ann, The Raggedy Man, and Old Aunt Mary were all based on real people. Riley used the Lizabuth Ann any time he refers to the "Hired Girl". The poems include Our Hired Girl, The Raggedy Man and Lizabuth Ann on Baking Day.

The current Lizabuth Ann's Kitchen is a converted 1920's garage. James Whitcomb Riley , the Hoosier poet was born in Greenfield October 7, 1849. He was known throughout the United States for his poetry. He wrote 1000 poems. His poems in dialect appealed to the common and are best read out loud. Yes we need to support our home town hero by expanding the facility.

Enough. I have told you everything that I know and some things I don't. Talk to me.

2018-09-28

By Joe Skvarenina

Indians

What do you know about Hancock County 200 plus years ago.?

The Delaware were the predominate Indian group in Hancock County. But some say the Shawnees were also in Blue River and Brandywine Townships. The Delaware Indians are members of an Algonkian speaking tribe who called themselves the Lanape or Lenni Lanape. The word Lenape standing alone means "Common People". Lenni Lenape means "Genuine Man" or "Original People" in the Delaware language. Delaware is not an Indian word and they are the only ones to have a complete Anglicized name. It is derived from Thomas West, Lord de la Warr, an early Virginia colonial governor. Thomas, Lord de la Warr name was given to a bay and river and it was later modified to Delaware. In 1806 William Anderson or Kikthawenund became principal chief of the tribe until his death in 1830. The city of Anderson is named after him.

The first 50 years after 1828 and the county's founding the settlers were busy ditching and draining the fields and pastures for farming. As a result many of the materials left behind by Indians were destroyed. A family living on Fortville Pike notice many "gold rings" could be seen across their field so they called in a team from Indiana University to investigate. The team from IU discovered these rings was where the Indians split rocks around a fire to shape axes and other stone utensils. It was determined that this location was a point where tribes came to trade from a wide central Indiana area and beyond. Other sites have been discovered in Hancock County were a bridge was widened over the Blue River.

During the early days of settlement small band of Indians often roamed central Indiana. They traded with the settlers or trapped fur bearing animals to trade. They often camped on land of local farmers when they were in the county. Is your farm land an Indian village site? Enough. I have told you everything that I know and some things I don't. Talk to me.

2018-09-21

By
Joe Skvarenina

Pioneer Superstitions

Abe Lincoln's Indiana years were from 1816 to 1830. William Bartelt memorializes these years in his book "There I grew up". In one section he talks about pioneer superstitions which I conjecture were the same all over the state. Indiana was admitted to the Union in 1816 but it was still raw frontier. These observations were originally recorded by Rev. Edward Muir a Methodist minister in Spencer Indiana. According to Muir, "To the pioneer in Lincoln's day the carrying of an edged tool, such as a hoe or ax, through the hose was an omen of bad luck, foretelling the death of a family member within that period... The plaintiff howling of a dog meant that morrow would tell of death somewhere. The crossing of the hunters path by a dog meant bad luck unless the hunter locked his little finger until the dog was out of sight; or better still if he returned to the point of starting and began his journey anew, all ill fortune of bad luck occasioned by the bad start would be reckoned against him...Friday was a bad day in the calendar to be avoided anything new such as plowing , sowing or reaping in the fields, or making of a garment unless the labor could be completed during the day. A bird alighting on the widow or coming into the house was a sure sign of sorrow. All planting, sowing, fencing and preparation for the same was to be governed by certain signs of the moon. Plants such as potatoes, maturing beneath the surface of the sol must be planted in the dark of the moon. And in like manner tomatoes and beans must be planted during the light of the moon."

Do you know of any others? Enough. I have told you everything that I know and some things I don't. Talk to me.

2018-09-14

By
Joe Skvarenina

Theodore Roosevelt was an activist President and he loved the office. When he didn't receive the Republican nomination again he bolted the party and started the Progressive or Bull Moose Party. Roosevelt had served the remainder of the McKinley's term after his assassination and one of his own had announced he wouldn't seek a second term. He subsequently left the country and went on safari and when he came back to the states he didn't like how William Howard Taft ran the office so he decided to run again and the Republican convention denied him the opportunity. "Connections" the publication by the Indiana Historical Society tells us the story of James F. Reed who served as Chairman of the Hancock County Republican party beginning in 1910. In 1912 he left the party and became a Progressive, the same year the splinter group was founded. Reed ran for Hancock County Circuit Court Judge on the Progressive ticket in 1912. He lost the race. But he continued to be involved with the Bull Moose. In fact the local group met in Reed's law office. Later in 1916 he returned to the Republican Party after the Bull Moose movement's efforts began to fade. Roosevelt successfully split the Republican Ticket and Woodrow Wilson became President. Reed died in 1935 at 78 years of age from a cerebral hemorrhage. He and his wife are buried in Park Cemetery. He was a successful attorney and attended Bradley Methodist Church. His house and office were on Main Street also.

Thank to the Indiana Historical Society for publishing his diary and his important recollections. He recorded many Greenfield and national events in his writings including Pancho Villa's raid on Columbus Arizona. Enough. I have told you everything that I know and some things I don't. Talk to me by by witting the Daily Reporter or Jskvarenina@hotmail.com

2018-09-07

By
Joe Skvarenina

First Merchants Bank has recently joined the Greenfield community. It is a successor to Ameriana.

On July 25, 1883 Ameriana was incorporated as Greenfield Building and Loan Association. In 1899 the receipts were \$71,509.96. In the early years V.L. Early was President; Daniel B. Cooper, Vice President; Nelson Bradley, Treasurer; and John Corcoran, Secretary of the Greenfield Building and Loan. It is interesting to note that Nelson Bradley also had a hand in establishing the Greenfield Banking Company which was founded in 1871, the first bank in the county. In 1903 the receipts of Greenfield Building and Loan were \$52,584.34 down from \$56,263.80 in 1902. In 1926 the President was Isaac Goble with other officers being Michael Quigley, J., Ward Fletcher and Arthur Downing. The receipts in 1926 were \$122,003.63. In 1974 \$17,743,690. In 1976 Greenfield Building and Loan became Henry County Savings and Loan when the organizations merged. Gordon Messerlie was president of the Greenfield Building and Loan for 30 years and Vice President of Henry County Savings and Loan until his retirement in 1977. Later the name of Henry County Savings and Loan was changed to Ameriana. The current manager of First Merchants is Nick Ludlow. Nick is very active in Greenfield Chamber and other efforts. The staff at First Merchants site is top notch. Thanks to them for sharing the old documents.

I remember Henry County Savings and Loan when it was located in Dr. Kirkwood's office. I have been told prior to the brick building it was located in a house at the site. Enough. I have told you everything that I know and some things I don't. Talk to me by writing at the Daily Reporter or jskvarenina@hotmail.com.

2018-08-31

By
Joe Skvarenina

Early pioneers in Hancock County had a hard scrabble existence. Elihu Coffin came to Blue River township in Hancock County in 1831. According to the Binford History of Hancock County, there were no roads and the forest was yet to be cleared with many wild animals to exterminate. For weeks at a time settlers had to do without bread since the mills were frozen in the winter months and there were no steam mills for grinding. Coffin and others during the winter months lived on potatoes, pumpkins and wild game. Another early settler Harmon Warrum tells, "I was born in 1819 and when I was four years old my father moved to Hancock and settled on the Blue River." He goes on to tell us the first piece of land entered in Hancock County was on August 10, 1821 and the last January 16, 1854. According to Warrum, Blue River was dense wilderness for miles and miles with no sounds but the rustling of the trees, the moaning of the wind, the angry voice of a storm cloud with the buzzing of the mosquitoes and the fierce noises of wild animals. In those days neighbors were eight to ten miles away. Primitive Cabins were made of rounded logs. The first fire place and chimney were made of rocks, mud and sticks. There was an abundance of venison but it was difficult to procure salt to preserve it. That is when jerking came into use. In the early days they had to go to Richmond to get salt.

One pioneer when moving to Blue River Township crossed a small stream flowing south. When he asked the name of the stream he was told, it had none to which the name of Nameless Creek was applied which sticks to this day.

Enough. I have told you everything that I know and some things I don't. Talk to me jskvarenina@hotmail.com.

2018-08-24

By
Joe Skvarenina

Catherine Roberts shares, "On March 7, 1895, Hancock Lodge number 101 of the Free and Accepted Masons met to discuss the need to commission a new building for their order. Later that month, the Masons selected the site at the northwest corner of State and Main Street in Greenfield for their building. This site was known as Walker block, named for J. Ward Walker renowned Greenfield businessman and philanthropist, J. Ward Walker. Walker had previously owned the property, where he operated a storefront and lived above it. Walker owned property throughout the town, which would be developed into many sites still standing in the area today, such as the Greenfield Post Office. The Masons took up a collection to purchase the site at State and Main from Walker, and the president of the Greenfield Banking Company, Nelson Bradley, put in the first amount for the collection with \$1,000. The Masons met with prospective architects in May of 1895, and they selected the plans of Indianapolis architect Louis H. Gibson for the building. In July, local contractor Frank Hafner broke ground for the building. In August the contract for building the temple was awarded to the Heinzmann brothers of Noblesville, at the cost of \$26,998. The cornerstone for the building was laid in October of 1895, as the Masons marched from their current hall to the site of the new temple. The walls of the temple, completed in January of 1896, were over 60 feet long on their north and south sides, and they reached 132 feet on their east and west side." It is interesting to note that Gibson was primarily known for residential architecture and he committed suicide in 1907. Thanks Catt.

Nelson Bradley was elected the Hancock County Treasurer in 1863. After his second term he became involved with the mercantile trade in the Greenfield area after two years he sold his business and joined a partnership with J. Ward Walker, Morgan Chandler, H.A. Swope and S.T. Dickerson to establish the Greenfield Banking Company. He eventually became President and was the largest stock holder. Nelson gave \$5,000 for the building of the present Bradley Methodist church. It was dedicated in 1902 and named in his honor. He was on the building committee for the Masonic Lodge and his picture is in the stained glass window on the south side.

Enough. I told you everything that i know and some things I don't talk to me at jskvarenina@hotmail.com.

2018-08-17

More of Elijah Tyner

By

Joe Skvarenina

I have written before about Elijah Tyner but there is more to be told. His store building is still in existence on Morristown Pike in Hancock County. Yes he was one of the first successful merchants and nurserymen in Hancock County. He was always good in helping his neighbor. He was the second son of Rev. William Tyner a Baptist minister who went from South Carolina to Kentucky in 1802 and eventually to Indiana Territory in 1805 where Brookville now stands. After that family moved to Decatur County. Elijah was married three times with numerous children. Son James was a proprietor of a hotel in Morristown. He died in 1902. I wonder if that hotel was the forerunner of the Copper Kettle?

As a young man Elijah cut a road from Shelbyville to Blue River Township. After he completed his effort he built a log cabin and began clearing timber for one of the first orchards planted in the state. His house was isolated and many travelers passed through the area. After a short time in 1826 he purchased a small stock of dry goods and groceries which he offered for sale at his cabin. This was the first store in Hancock County. Tyner supported the many Union families left behind in Blue River Township during the Civil War. His charitable efforts were well appreciated by the community. He died Feb. 1, 1872. He is buried in the graveyard at Shiloh Christian Church. The land for the church was given by Elijah and his wife Sara who donated the land to the Baptists for the church. The property would revert back to the donors if no church was on the site. This church was later to become nondenominational Christian Church on Jan. 6 1904. The land was deeded to the Christians for a price of \$300 by the Regular Baptists. Tyner lived in Hancock for 1826-1872.

Thanks to David Lee Willis for providing all the Tyner information. Elijah was his first cousin 4 times removed.

Enough. I have told you everything that I now and some things I don't. Talk to me.

2018-08-10

By
Joe Skvarenina

Prior to the close of the Civil War there were few paved or gravel streets in Greenfield. After the Civil War road repair efforts picked up. With incorporation in 1876 as a city the work of grading and graveling streets and sidewalks began taking place at a rapid place.. The first street graveled was Pennsylvania Street by John R. Johnson contractor followed by N. State with Thomas R. Miller contractor. Fourth Street and Bradley Street by Comstock Contractors followed by South State Street, Walnut Street, South Pennsylvania Street, Mechanic and Main Street n addition to a number of alleys by Faurot and Brown Contractors. The sidewalks were graveled at the same time. The most extensive improvement was Main Street with grading and graveling, sidewalks and bouldering of the cutters. Today Tyler Rankins, the current street commissioner and his crew, take excellent care of these local roads not serviced by the state. Brick Street came into being during the 1920's. Today Riley Street and the alley by the old Catholic Church are the only brick streets currently still in existence. I believe that Riley Street was once called Mechanic Street. Last, when was the first traffic signal placed in town? Do you know the location? I know that during the 1940's police had call boxes in town with a red light on top to signal the officers to call into the station.

Enough. I have told you everything that I know and some things I don't. Talk-to me at jskvarenina@hotmail.com.

2018-08-03

By
Joe Skvarenina

Hancock County was founded on March 1, 1828 and named for John Hancock, the first man to sign the Declaration of Independence. The town of Greenfield was chosen as the county seat on April 11, 1828. At that time the county population was 400. It had about 60 dwellings. James Hamilton's frame dwelling was the fourth on the north side of the National Road.

The area that is now Hancock County, Indiana was formed out of territory ceded by the Delaware Indians as part of the New Purchase in the Treaty of St. Mary's in 1818. THE State Legislature divided the land Jan. 22, 1820 into Wabash and Delaware Counties. Thus the first Sheriff of the territory later known as Hancock County would have been the Sheriff of Delaware County. In 1823 Delaware County was divided into Madison and Delaware Counties. It was in 1824 one of the earliest crises took place. A group of white men seeing two Indian families with furs killed the entire party of warriors, squaws and the children for their furs. Word spread and the entire frontier feared a massive Indiana uprising,. The Sheriff notified the Governor and the militia to help capture the men responsible and they were successful. The Sheriff raised some of the militia from the part of Madison which is now northern Hancock to guard the prisoners at the county seat which was Pendleton. A trial was held and three of the four men were found guilty. This was the first time that white men were found guilty for murdering Indians and put to death. Hancock County was divided from Madison in 1828.

Enough. I have told you everything that I know and some things I don't. Talk to me.

2018-07-28

By
Joe Skvarenina

There were several churches in the early Jackson township history that no longer exists. Among them was the Missionary Baptist Union Church. It was organized July 19, 1852 at a location which was known as Pleasant Hill. The congregation had two buildings and worshiped until the 1890's when the church organization dissolved from deaths and removals of membership and the building was torn down. Center Church Society of Friends on the northwest quarter of the south east corner of section 24, township 16, range building was erected 1879 at a cost of \$300. When the church was first organized in 1878 services were conducted at the Leamom's Corner's school house until the church edifice was constructed. Worship at the church ended in the 1890's. The current Charlottesville Friends located south of the railroad tracks in Rush county was established during the late 60's.

The Pleasant Hill Methodist Episcopal Church was organized at the residence Moses Braddock in 1834. When it was first organized it belonged to the Knightstown Circuit. In 1838 the congregation constructed a log church which was also used as a school. In 1841 the church was made part of the Greenfield Circuit. In 1852 a new church was built south of Willow today Willow Branch. Both of these churches stood about 80 rods east of the range land. After the Big Four railroad was constructed and passed through Willow Branch the congregation erected a church there on the west side.

An Evangelical Lutheran Church was organized Charlottesville in 1847 by Pastor Wells. The first person to preach in the building was Pastor S.P. Snider. The church ran well for several years with the highest membership of 150. Eventually members scattered and services ceased to be held in the early 60's. In the later eighties the church was remodeled and used by the just organized Christian congregation.

The Baptists also held worship Silas Huntington's Home in the extreme northwest of Jackson County for a number of years. The New Lights Society also had a little church in the northeast of the county for a number of years.

The Christian Church of Charlottesville was organized in 1888 with thirteen members. The congregation secured the old abandoned Lutheran Church and fixed it up to use as place of worship until they could afford a new structure. A new building was built in the north end of town but was destroyed by a storm on June 25, 1902. A new substantial frame structure seating 400 individuals was rebuilt in 1903. It was dedicated in 1903 by Rev. Hufford. This is the current structure at the site. The church is now called the By His Grace, Charlottesville Worship Center.

Enough. I have told you everything that I know and some things I don't. Talk to me
@Jskvarenina@hotmail.com

2018-07-20

By
Joe Skvarenina

Looks like the stores are coming back to Greenfield. Men are again able to buy clothes in town. In 1895 you could go to the SPOT cash store and buy your shoes. Men's fine dress shoes for \$2.00 were sold for \$1.50 on sale. Special trimmed women's hats with pretty flowers sold for 96 cents which were discounted from \$1.25. Baby's shoes were 16 cents. In the old Masonic Building the first two floors was also a store called J. Ward Walker and Company. If you go there now you can see the patterns of the display cases on the floor. They sold hats for 50 cents, Swiss embroidered handkerchiefs for 20, 25, 35 cents down from 50 cents. Later Goodman's Department Store and P.N. Hirsch were at the location. The according to Walkers ad "Our one great aim is to get goods to our customers cheaper than any one". Other businesses in town in 1895 included C.W. Morrison & Son Undertakers, 27 Main Street, now a parking lot; J.M. Hinchman's Grocery Store, W.A. Wilkins Dug Store, 21 Main Street; Cuyler Photography, James H. Braggs, Restaurant & Bar; Frank Hammel's China Store; William Tollen's new meat market; The Holland Restaurant and Bar, Crescent Pharmacy; and Early's Double Drug Store.

Everything is up north now. But at one time the Kroger's store was on West Main Street in Greenfield. I don't know the location do you? In 1935 the Kroger's moved to SE corner of American Legion Place and Main Street. It was located in the old florist shop now the auctioneer center. At the time of the move the most expensive cut of meat in the meat case was 35 cents. A later date the Regal Market was location across East Street from the Christian Church.

Enough. I have told you every things that I know and some things i don't. Talk to me.

2018-07-13

By
Joe Skvarenina

Have you ever heard of Cry Baby Bridge? Steve Elsbury says it is located on 675 North near the Hayes Cemetery North of 234. It is a metal span and Steve tells that some believe that it is haunted. At night around midnight if you listen carefully you can hear a baby cry. Some say it was a child killed in an auto accident or a runaway slave child drowned to prevent discovery by the slave catchers.

I told you I fought that Hazel Moore Thompson was the first women office holder in Hancock County. He served as the Recorder in 1929. But Bob Wortman tells that his grandmother Vennis Davis was the Blue River Township Trustee in 1922. Does anyone have a comment on that one? Also the Blue Bird had a pool hall and a barber shop at the site at one time. Also Harlan Sanders had a Kentucky Fried in the area and when it opened up he worked in the kitchen to be sure that everything was up to par and I guess he inspected every plate before it was served.

The Creative Arts Center was dedicated as the Masonic Building on May 23 1895 and Louis Gibson was the architect. The first edition of the Daily Reporter was April 27, 1908 and the library has all of Reporter and other newspapers downloaded for your review. When you are looking for some particular information go and look at the old newspapers. If you review Volume I Edition I of the Daily Reporter it is interesting to look at the ads and see what businesses were in town in 1895: New Milling Company, Star Concrete Machinery Companion, Griffey Johnson Stoves and Ranges, J.P. Black, Oculist, A.A. Gappen Sporting Goods, Shumway Brothers Builders, Walter Baldwin Plumbing, C.A. Snow Patent Attorney, J.B. Brooks Tombstones, Joseph Lewis, Transfer, M.S. Smulyan used furniture, and J.W. Sparks dentist. Bill Dishman gave a 1929 Sanborn map to the Library. The Sanborn Company was an insurance company that did a map listing all the businesses locations. Go look at it.

Enough. I have told you everything that I know and some things I don't. Talk to me.

2018-07-06

By
Joe Skvarenina

The year 1920 marks the 100th anniversary of the passage of the 19th amendment and women getting the right to vote. Linda Dunn writes, "I have been researching some of the notable women in Hancock County and while I know that Mary Sample, Nellie Baldwin and Eva Reeves served overseas in WWI. Additionally, I know that Mrs. Sarah Gant was the first female teacher and she taught in Green Township. However, I've been unable to find the dates she taught." Paul McNeil from the Hancock County Library helps in our search and writes,

"One 1935 article I found said these women served overseas: Nelle Baldwin, Lillian Baker, and Mrs. Frank Wills (Lydia Lewis Wills). Article is attached. I did see a lot of hits for Mary Sample when searching the newspaper.

Lydia Lewis, Army Nurse Corps, Hancock County, Indiana served in Rouen, Nice & Menton, France. *Decorated by King George*, British Royal Red Cross, 2nd Class The Royal Red Cross medal was introduced to Military Nursing by Royal Warrant by Queen Victoria on 27 April in 1883 which was St George's Day. The decoration is awarded to army nurses for exceptional services, devotion to duty and professional competence in British military nursing. Queen Victoria wanted a special award for the distinguished service by women nursing sisters in South Africa

Saw several articles listing Sarah Gant as first female teacher. No dates. Lewis Tyner was said to be first teacher in county according to articles. Found later in Binford history, p34." I know that record tells us many more women served in WW II. Thanks Paul for your assistance.

Enough. I have told you everything that I know and some things I don't. Talk to me.

2016-06-29

By
Joe Skvarenina

Catherine Roberts, writes "I am researching the building located at 2 W. Main Street, the Creative Arts and Events Center, for a project in my Local History and Genealogy class in pursuit of my Masters of Library and Information Science. I was wondering if you had any information regarding the building's construction or any information on its uses over the years. I've been consulting Richman's text, as well as some of your works for information regarding the building, but I wanted to ask you directly if you had any additional information you could provide about the structure. I am aware of the uses of the Masonic Hall and I've found some information regarding the J. Ward Walker Company, but I was hoping you might know or be able to provide information regarding the architect of the building. I have looked through the Interim Report but it did not list an architect, nor does the entry for the building's inclusion in the historic district listed in the National Register. " After some exhaustive research in the Hancock County Democrat Ms. Roberts discovered that the architect was Louis Gibson.

The Creative Arts Building is the second Masonic Lodge in Greenfield. I believe that the architecture is Romanesque Revival and was built in 1895. The first Masonic Building was at current the location of Joyner Homes. Prior to 1854 the lodge had no building and met in the Old Seminary Building on Pennsylvania Street. In 1854 the group gained in size and could afford its own structure. The building was a three story brick building at the Joyner site. The corner stone was laid by Deputy Grand Master Elijah Newlin on August 15, 1854. Hancock County Lodge 101 now has a third site.

Enough. I have you every thing that I know and some things I don't. Talk to me

2018-06-23

By
Joe Skvarenina

I really like used book sales if you don't believe me ask my wife. The other day I came across an old pamphlet called " About Oaklandon" by Paul E. Hamilton written probably in 1972 for the Civic Association & Eastern Lawrence Township Planning Council. I have often wondered about the town as I drive through on State Route 67. It tell us," The village of Oakland is situated thirteen miles from Indianapolis on the Bee-line railroad. It was laid out June 8,1849. by John Emery. The name Oakland was suggested by Dr. Moore...the first practicing physician was James W. Hervey." It is interesting to note that Dr. Hervey also practiced in Mt. Comfort in Hancock County. He was known as the father of the Indiana State Board of Health. State Road 67 was paved in the 1920's. " Some how the engineers did properly plan the drainage , and then the state and county road never corrected the matter and the present Canal Street(Broadway) resulted. About the name Oakland, when the post office came to town in 1870 it became Oaklandon. Another Oaklandon first was Clara wife of Frank Mccord was the first female embalmer in the state.

The first interurban went through Oaklandon New Years day 1900.The community was served by the Union Traction Co. The last interurban ran in Jan 1941. The town also had its own Natural gas supply . The Oakland Gas and Oil Company continued operating until September 1950. It sold out to the Citizens Gas and the Coke Utility.

Enough. I have told you everything that I know and some things I don't. Talk to me.

2018-06-15

By Joe Skvarenina

Jim Grass writes, "I work for the Indiana Department of Transportation, which is beginning to research communication activities and events to mark its 100th anniversary in 2019. I noticed that a Nov. 15, 2015 column you wrote in the Greenfield Daily Reporter included a mention of Greenfield contractor C.M. Kirkpatrick.

Among the first five construction contracts let by the (INDOT antecedent) Indiana State Highway Commission on July 15, 1919, was a Wayne County project that was awarded to Kirkpatrick:

As reported in the South Bend News-Times, July 16, 1919:
National road, between Cambridge and Centerville, 1.5 miles, to C.M. Kirkpatrick, Greenfield, \$37,650.55, concrete.

As reported in the Greencastle Herald, July 16, 1919:
National road, Wayne county, between Cambridge City and Centerville, 1.5 miles, C.M. Kirkpatrick of Greenfield, on a bid of \$37,650.55, concrete. The bid price was \$25,100 a mile. This was the estimate of the cost made by the commission.

I'm trying to uncover whether the C.M. Kirkpatrick Company of Greenfield is still in existence or whether it was absorbed into another company (which may still be in existence)."

No , I don't believe that it is still in existence. I know that they worked on Interurban Lines in 1900 and the National Road in 1919. But beyond that I don't know. Does anyone else know anything about the C. M. Kirkpatrick Company?

Enough. I told you everything that I know and some things I don't. Talk to me.

Niles Road Contract Let by State Highway Board

By Associated Press:

INDIANAPOLIS, Ind., July 15.—The state highway commission today awarded contracts for improvement work on five roads to cost an aggregate of \$761,913.35. Bids were asked for work on eight roads and eleven bids were received. However, no bids were made on the work on two of the roads and on a third the bids were higher than the estimates of the commission's engineers and no contract was awarded.

The contracts awarded follow:

Niles road, north of South Bend, 4.68 miles, to the White Construc-

tion Co., Milwaukee, bid \$192,518.29, bituminous concrete construction.

National road, between Cambridge and Centerville, 1.5 miles, to C. M. Kirkpatrick, Greenfield, \$37,659.55, concrete.

National road, Indianapolis to Hendricks county line, 6.11 miles, to George T. Miller, Indianapolis, \$179,127.90, concrete.

Louisville road, near Seymour, 2.45 miles, to Lawrence Jenkins, Frankfort, \$68,546, cement.

Madison road, Indianapolis to Greenwood, 7.2 miles, to Marion county construction company, \$282,279.70, bituminous concrete.

LET CONTRACTS FOR FIVE ROADS

STATE HIGHWAY COMMISSION
ORDERS FIRST IMPROVE-
MENTS UNDER NEW LAW—NO
BIDS ON TWO SECTIONS—WILL
BE RE-ADVERTISED AT ONCE
—TWENTY-TWO MILES COST
\$761,013.

THIRD ABOVE ESTIMATE

Contracts for the improvement of five roads to be built at an aggregate cost of \$761,013.35 were awarded Tuesday by the State Highway Commission. These roads, totaling twenty-two miles, are the first to be contracted for under the present state highway law. Construction work will be started within a few days.

Bids had been asked for eight roads. Eleven bids were received, but no bids however were submitted on two of the roads and on a third no contract was let because the price submitted was more than the estimate made by the engineering department of the commission. The three roads not awarded aggregate 17.38 miles. These roads, together with five more roads, will be advertised at once and bids will be received late this month.

Road Improvement Ordered.

The road improvements for which contracts were awarded follow:

Niles road, St. Joseph county, north of South Bend, 4.68 miles, awarded to White Construction Company, Milwaukee, Wis., \$192,259.20. The road is to be constructed of bituminous concrete. The estimate made by the commission's engineers was \$41,102.40, which was the price bid.

Madison road, Marion and Johnson County, south of Indianapolis to Greenwood, 7.30 miles, Marion County Construction Company, \$283,329.70, bituminous concrete. This price figures \$38,812.30 a mile, which was the estimate made by the commission.

National road, Wayne county, between Cambridge City and Centerville, 1.5 miles, C. M. Kirkpatrick of Greenfield, on a bid of \$37,650.55, cement. The bid price was \$25,100 a mile. This was the estimate of the cost made by the commission.

National road, Indianapolis, to the Hendricks county line, 6.11 miles, George T. Miller, \$179,127.90, cement. The estimate of the cost made by the commission was \$179,141.77 or \$29,319.45 a mile.

Louisville road, Jackson county, near Seymour, 24.6 miles, Lawrence Jenkins of Frankfort, \$68,546, cement. The estimate by the commission was \$70,04.35 or \$28,822.90 a mile.

Others to Be Readvertised.

The three roads which will be re-advertised follow: National road, Putnam and Hendricks county, 8.12 miles; Lincoln Highway, St. Joseph and Elkhart counties, 3.59 miles and Range Line road, Marion and Hamilton counties, 5.76 miles. No bids were received on these sections of the Range Line and National roads.

Green Castle Herald 1919-07-16

2018-06-08

By Joe Skvarenina

Linda Dunn writes, "I wondered if you knew who was the first woman elected to a county public office in Hancock County by the voters. I know Margaret Brooks, who owned the monument business was elected secretary of the city school board in 1918, before women gained the right to vote in 1920 and she was elected president of the school board in 1919 after the board was reorganized, but I'm curious about who was the first woman elected to office by public vote.

I have been researching the role of Hancock County women in the woman's suffrage movement for a book I'm writing about this effort and in addition to the women mentioned in the Richman history as being members of the Greenfield Woman's Franchise League, I've managed to find a few others by going through old Hancock Democrat and Daily Reporter newspapers that are available online.

This led me to wonder if there are any official records of who were the first women elected to city and council offices.

Mrs. Gertrude Holland, of Maxwell was elected Attendance Office in 1923 but I'm not certain that is an election by popular vote. The next woman I found elected was Mrs. Josephine Bright (Republican) who was elected clerk-treasurer at Fortville.

With the 100th anniversary of the ratification of the 19th Amendment coming up in 2020, I wanted to compile some records to mark the occasion."

Linda, I believe it was Hazel Moore Thompson was nominated and elected County Recorder in 1929. She was a Democrat and was the first woman to hold local public office. She set an example for many local women.

Enough. I have told you everything that I know and some things I don't. Talk to me

Then & Now Hancock County page 20 has a photo of her.

2018-06-01

By
Joe Skvarenina

One Rooms Schools

The Northwest Territory Ordinance of 1787 enacted to establish new states within the northwest United States provided that sale income from section 16 or the middle of each new township be reserved for public schools. The township was the basic and most relevant unit to carry out a system of public education at the time. In 1824 township trustees were entrusted with school land and funds and the authority to divide the township into school districts having three district trustees. The trustees were also authority to hire and examine teachers and establish some form of testing. But in 1856 it became to be recognized by teachers that there were to many small public schools. In 1897 Indiana enacted it first law for mandatory attendance for children between the ages of eight and fourteen. In 1899 the trustees had to provide public transportation for any students who lived 2 miles from the school. In 1907 the state mandated that Trustees close any school with twelve or less students. In 1923 a law went through the General Assembly to replace township school with a county system. The Great Depression had the effect of hurrying consolidation. Local taxpayers were forced to seek relief from state funds for school operations during this period. State aid to the township schools went from 10 to 40%. By 1960 the Township Schools were gone from the scene. Thanks to who ever sent me the photos the school I believe on Morristown Pike. The one room school is being torn down in the county for numerous reasons. Please think twice before you do it.

Enough I have told you everything that I know and some things I don't Talk to me.





2018-05-25

by
Joe Skvarenina

Will Vawter

Will Vawter was born in Virginia on April 3, 1871. He died Feb. 1941 at the age of 69 and is buried in Park Cemetery. He was an artist and is among the Hancock County greats! His first professional work was for the "Indianapolis Sentinel" Later he did work for "The Cincinnati Gazette, Indianapolis News "Success" and "The Presbyterian." He also did drawings for "St Nicholas Magazine", 'Judge', 'Life" and others.

His first newspaper drawing was for the Hancock County Democrat using chalk plates on which sketched were made with a sharp tool. From the a cast was made and he did hundreds of these drawings. But he is best known for Riley book illustrations. His works were accurate portrayals of the times in which he lived. His house is the Dutch colonial and it still survives north of the Memorial Building. In 1910 he was married to Mary Howey Murray. That year he moved to Brown County and became a member of the Brown County Art Colony. In 1923 he married Ola Genolin in Nashville. I hope there are plans to recognize him on the artist trail which is being talked about. He needs more recognition in our community. David Spencer is Greenfield's Vawter expert

Vawter, has some works hanging in the Riley Museum, "The Ragged Man" go and see it. There is also a photo of Vawter at the museum.

Enough. I have told you ever thing I know and some things I don't Talk to me.

2018-05-19

By
Joe Skvarenina

Jackson Township's lost churches

There were several churches in the early Jackson township history that no longer exists. Among them was the Missionary Baptist Union Church. It was organized July 19, 1852 at a location which was known as Pleasant Hill. The congregation had two buildings and worshiped until the 1890's when the church organization dissolved from deaths and removals of membership and the building was torn down. Center Church Society of Friends on the northwest quarter of the south east corner of section 24 , township 16,range building was erected 1879 at a cost of \$300. When the church was first organized in 1878 services were conducted at the Leamon's Corner's school house until the church edifice was constructed. Worship at the church ended in the 1890's.The current Charlottesville Friends located south of the railroad tracks in Rush county was established during the late 60's.

The Pleasant Hill Methodist Episcopal Church was organized at the residence Moses Braddock in 1834. When it was first organized it belonged to the Knightstown Circuit. In 1838 the congregation constructed a log church which was also used as a school. In 1841 the church was made part of the Greenfield Circuit. In 1852 a new church was built south of Willow today Willow Branch. Both of these churches stood about 80 rods east of the range land. After the Big Four railroad was constructed and passed through Willow Branch the congregation erected a church there on the west side.

An Evangelical Lutheran Church was organized Charlottesville in 1847 by Pastor Wells. The first person to preach in the building was Pastor S.P. Snider. The church ran well for several years with the highest membership of 150. Eventually members scattered and services ceased to be held in the early 60's.In the later eighties the church was remodeled and used by the just organized Christian congregation.

The Baptists also held worship Silas Huntington's Home in the extreme northwest of Jackson County for a number of years. The New Lights Society also had a little church in the northeast of the county for a number of years.

Enough. I have told you everything and somethings I don't Talk to me.

2018-05-11

By
Joe Skvarenina

Early historians tell us the natural resources of Hancock County are such as to make the community the garden spot of the world and a most delightful spot to live with fertile soil, a level surface, abundant rainfall and a temperate climate. There were early pioneers living in the county as early as 1818. Named for John Hancock, president of Continental Congress and signer of the Declaration of Independence, Hancock County was separated from Madison county and was organized in 1828. The county commissioners meeting at the home Samuel Jackson and created three townships named for the main streams that run through each: Blue River, Brandywine and Sugar Creek. More townships were added until 1850. Finally the borders of the present township were fixed: Vernon, Buck Creek, Sugar Creek, Green, Center, Brandywine, Brown, Jackson, and Blue River. Since March 11, 1853, Jackson Township has had its present boundaries.

The first land entry in Jackson Township was made by William Oldham, November 11, 1824 two and one half miles north of Charlottesville. Water power for grist and saw mills was furnished by Nameless Creek. In the thirties a blacksmith shop was operated by Abraham Huntington, in 1844 a tannery was erected in the township by James R. Bracken and a tile factory was erected in 1869 by Thomas L. Marsh and William Draper. In 1846 an nursery was operated north of Charlottesville in 1846 by Isaac Barrett. Jackson Township has two towns, Cleveland and Charlottesville, both on the National Road, Two years prior to the Civil War Cleveland was known as Portland and it was a business center at one time with a tavern, store, saw mill, and physicians. In 1916 Cleveland had one frame church and the Eastern Indiana Holiness Association. Charlottesville, one of the oldest communities in the county was surveyed by David Templeton on June 16, 1836. Numerous businesses were located at the site. Charlottesville was incorporated in 1867. In 1880's the town forfeited their charter. There was also two crossroad communities Leamon's Corner and Stringtown. There was a post office and a blacksmith shop at Leamon's Corner. When the post office closed the summer 1881 and blacksmith shop was soon to follow. Stringtown still exists along the National Road. At one time there was a blacksmith shop, saw mill and a foundry run by Liberty Trees. Early autos were produced at the site.

Enough. I have told you everything that I know and some things I don't. Talk to me.

2018-05-04

By
Joe Skvarenina

The Pentecostal Church of the Nazarene was organized in 1915 in Stringtown. A sum of \$500 was subscribed to the new church on the evening of its organization. Grover Van Duyn and wife donated a plot for the church at the northwest corner made by the crossing of the National Road across the road of Liberty Trees old shop. The house of worship was completed in 1916. The first church of this order was created in 1895. It teaches Wesleyan doctrine of Christian perfection, but has a congregational form of worship.

In 1838 Rev. Joseph Williams and others conducted a camp meeting and organized a class in the neighborhood of Wesley Williams. A year or two later a log church was built and it along with School House # 9 was used for worship. In 1867 a new meeting house was built next to School House # 9 at the cost of \$1,000 and was known as Brown's Chapel. The church was dedicated October, 1868 by Rev. George Brown of Cincinnati Bible College and was named in his honor. It was now called Brown's Chapel Methodist Protestant Church. In the 1880's the church was sold to The Apostolic Holiness Union and Prayer Union. In 1898 it was repaired and remodeled. This building stood until June 25, 1902 when it was destroyed by a cyclone. In 1904 new church was erected to replace this structure under the faith challenge of Thomas Williams. In the early 1940's a classroom was added to the building. In 1967 the entire building was remodeled. In 1968 the church was renamed Brown's Chapel Wesleyan. A major expansion and remodeling project was dedicated in 1997. It is reported that the original beams are still part of the structure. There has been 49 Pastors serving Brown's Chapel

Enough. I have told you everything that I know and some things I don't. Talk to me.

2018-04-27

By
Joe Skvarenina

Where is the German community located in Hancock County? According to the Zion Lutheran Church history, the original German community was located generally highway 40 to the north and Highway 52 to the south, 500 West on the east and 800 West on the west. The German Lutherans who came into the area emphasized education so that their children could be literate learn the Lutheran religion along with the German traditions and language. Public school was not built in New Palestine until 1884. At first the church Pastor served also as a teacher. In the 1860's a Mr. Lahusen was employed as a teacher. In those days it was custom for the teacher to "Board Around" living with the members a week at a time. One day he asked Pastor Kunz if he would be able to substitute for him. The Pastor willingly agreed. A few days later Mr. Lahusen disappeared as did the money he borrowed from the congregation members. Pastor Kunz took over the teaching responsibilities at this point or until 1879. If you travel down the Brookville Road you can see the old school house which was pulled across the field and stopped at the railroad tracks and turned into a residence.

In 1880 the Richman history of Hancock County tells, "To the German Lutherans, the house that had been dedicated to the worship of God is a sacred place. For this reason they will permit no meetings to be held in the church except regular services and business meetings for the administration of the affairs of the church." A little story in the Hancock Democrat tells, "At the German Lutheran Church under the superintendency of Rev. J.C. Kunz, the Christmas tree and the appropriate declamations and the Christmas songs and the extra large amount of presents on the occasion, was surely the greatest affair ever exhibited in Hancock County. This congregation is the most numerous in membership and wealth, and the members are very liberal in their donations for church and school purposes and have celebrated Christmas in the greatest manner imaginable, which would have credited to a metropolitan city as it is much credit to the church and its worthy minister and will bear imitation..." Zion is has restored their old cemetery were the first Pastor is buried. Pastor Kunz at first also served St. Paul in Indianapolis simultaneously.

Enough. I have told you every thing I know and some things I don't. Talk to me.

2018-04-20

By
Joe Skvarenina

I was going down the old Brookville Treaty Road commonly (called State Rte 52) the other day past the home of Marcia Parker. Marcia and family live in the Schildmeier home which at one time had toll gate in the front of it. In 1852 the State allowed turnpike companies to improve roads usually with gravel. As a result of these improvements users would have to pay a toll to travel the road.

Close to Marcia's House is the Schildmeier cemetery. It seems that Zion German Lutheran and Reformed Congregations worshiped across 700 West from the Cemetery in a log church until about 1851. In 1845, Christian and his wife Maria Schildmeier conveyed to the " church of Zion in consideration of two dollars and fifty cents one fourth acre upon the express conditions: that said land be used for a burying ground and there be a dwelling built on said land, and further that the members of the church of Zion shall fence said ground with a good fence and keep said fence in good repair and should the meeting house adjoining the above described be discontinued the said Christian Schildmeier and his heirs or assigns have the burying ground back for the sum of two dollars and fifty cents."

It is also interesting to note that Anton Schildmeier in 1888 served on the building committee for the German Evangelical Church in New Palestine. Anton Schildmeier is the name on Marcia Parker's barn. I do believe it this current church building now stands in New Palestine as the United Church. In 1840 Anton Schildmeier and his wife Sophia built a large barn. In 1974 it was remodeled and used as a home by Max and Mildred Hendryx, Marcia's parents.

Enough. I have told you everything that I know and some things I don't. Talk to me.

2018-04-13

By
Joe Skvarenina

Around 1935 Emma Schramm Vonnegut translated into English the letters of her grandfather, Jacob Schramm and his family, from Indiana to Germany in the year 1836 for her children and grandchildren. In 1954 the Indiana Historical Society received a gift of the Schramm papers which included 78 volumes of diaries, two account books, miscellaneous manuscripts and some printed items. The diaries were kept by Wilhelm August Schramm son of Jacob Schramm and extended from 1851-1908. These works were a great source for information on early Hancock County farm life. Items like the conversion of swamps into farm land by draining and tilling, building roads, preparing the virgin soil for ploughing and harvesting, also farm tools and equipment from homemade items to sophisticated machinery. These books also gave information field crops, orchards, as well as livestock raised. The writings provide a glimpse of family and social life in rural Indiana. For example, "My memory to a log cabin set down among the large trees...The cabin had a large fireplace where the baking and cooking was done...There my grandmother told stories of their earlier years in the wilderness, for instance, how she used to tie a string from tree to tree when she went out in the woods so that she could find her way back to the house...In the later years a little white church (Lutheran) was built and to it my grandmother went regularly as long as she lived..."

The Schramm papers have been reprinted by the Indiana Historical Society and the last I knew the Hancock County Historical Society had a few copies. Enough I have told you everything that I know and some things I don't. Talk to me.

2018-04-06

By Joe Skvarenina

Stephanie Gillette writes, "I am not a relative of Mr. Black, but knew him all my life and lived in his house on Douglas for a years before I moved to Alaska. My friend sent me your very nice article on Tom's house. Thanks for writing it.

I wanted to include a few things from Tom's life you might be interested in. One, Tom told me that his only job was that of a reporter for the American Red Cross and I have a beaded wine bottle someone gave him upon his travels during the war. His father had died in a streetcar accident which left his mother with four children (Tom as the oldest).

He had a farm in Indiana as well as the house on Douglas. He also had a farm and house in France and a farm in Mexico. The farms were all share-cropped. My parents (R.B. Orr and Carolyn Grabhorn Orr) were both from Greenfield, but we met Tom in France at his house near Paris. We spent many a weekend with him and his friends, Count and Countess Delerochette. When we returned to the USA, Tom sold his holdings in France and returned to Greenfield.

He spent his life doing historical research on Napoleon and Vietnam. He was fluent in about ten languages and had an extensive library of over 4000 books. He gave the farmhouse to the sharecroppers and sold the farmland. He gave his house to me.

I have read his book 'Along the Coast of Berbery'. The area is Morocco and that coastline. He spent many years traveling there with his mother and brother. His mother would just decide to go - and walk out of the house. The neighbors would have to go in to clean up the breakfast dishes and close up the house. Tom's mother usually put the two girls in a nunnery in France while she took the two boys with her traveling. She loved Morocco and spend a lot of time there. Richard painting many paintings there. But Richard contracted TB and came home to die. Tom's Mother also contracted a strange disease which was unknown and she died in the house. She was very interested in the occult.

Tom told lots of tales of James Whitcomb Riley getting drunk and sleeping on a cot in Tom's father's office. But most of the tales he told me would not brighten the history of Mr. Riley.

Many of the works Tom wrote were not published because of politics of the people involved. He was very knowledgeable of French history, including their years in Vietnam. He told me of the French selling the rubber plantations to rich Americans right before we became involved in Vietnam. I guess money moves the world.

Did you know that house, 222 Douglas Street, was build in 1883 by an Italian and had 16 different kinds of wood in the inlaid dining room floor? It also had lovely details such as acid carvings in the door hinges. The old barn had been made into a magnificent art studio with walls which lifted up to let in light, shelves for holding canvases, and a fireplace with tall backed seats. There was even a loft bedroom for napping. Unfortunately an unscrupulous roofer roofed the barn for Tom backwards so the ridges held water instead of releasing it. It ruined the barn

and everything in it before Tom died. I made three stained glass windows which I left installed in the house.

Tom had a wooden rocking chair which was long enough to hold about eight people. It had come from the stagecoach stop in Greenfield. People would rock while waiting for their dinner to be cooked."

Thanks Stephanie. Thanks for sharing your memories of Tom. You do him proud by telling his true and accurate story.

Enough. I have told you everything that I know and some things I don't. Talk to me.

2018-03-30

By Joe Skvarenina

Amy Harrison Bauer writes 'I wanted to contact you to share a bit of information about my friend, Charlie Fox. Reefer Charlie was a Grand Duke of the Road. One year, Charlie gifted me with a photo of him with Steam Train Maury who was the King of the Hobos. Sadly this picture was destroyed when my father's house burned in 88. On the back of the photo, Charlie had written each of their names and other information For his own, Charlie had written Charles Elmer Fox "Reefer Charlie" (nothing to do with smoking weeds)! He went on to explain he was given this nickname due to his preference of traveling in or on the refrigerated rail cars depending on the weather. These titles were not self-styled, they were won in yearly elections which take place at the Annual Hobo Convention in Britt, Iowa. Incidentally, Charlie's second book, Tales of an American Hobo, was published by the University of Iowa Press... I recall well my Granddad telling a story about how when he was young, he "hoboed around" and found himself passing through some Iowa town on a train. When he hopped off, he was pretty promptly picked up by the police, sentenced with vagrancy because he had no money, sent to the county Pea Farm and forced into hard labor for a number of months. His release marked the end of his hobo days. Granddad hightailed it home to Southern Illinois and didn't leave the area for decades." Charlie Fox sent Amy a birthday card which included some hobo art and she shares it with us.

Enough. I have told you everything that I know and some things I don't. Talk to me.

2018-03-23

By Joe Skvarenina

I just completed working with Chad Hudson, Executive Director of the Hancock County Boys and Girls Club, on writing their history. I am sure you can contact Chad for a copy but make a donation if you can do so. The James Whitcomb Riley Foundation for Youth better known as the Greenfield Boys and Girls Club was organized and incorporated officially on May 27, 1938. The club was founded to provide supervised recreation for boys of Greenfield and Center Township. Activities of the club were carried out in the basement of the old Riley School. The facade now being the school corporation offices. Reverend Fred Hill from Bradley United Methodist Church was the first President of the Club. The Board of Directors also met in the basement of the school building. In 1938 there was 245 club members. Mr. Russell was the first paid club director. he was paid with contributions from the school board and the City of Greenfield. On March 11, 1940 the club move to the old Lincoln School which was on South Pennsylvania Street and was no longer used for classes. To use the abandon building the club had to raise \$1,575.10 and there was a WPA grant for \$1,935 to remodel the site. In 1951 the school board needed to use the old Lincoln School so the club had to find a new home. Construction began on the current facility and it was dedicated September 21, 1952. Club Directors included over the years Russell Bratton, O.H. Pares, Lewis Palmer, Charles Harmon, Bill Spacey, Bruno Milakovic, Marvin Fletcher, Lawrence Gushman, O.H. Ferris, William Palmer, Winthrop McFerran, Jim Andrews, Ron Horning, Darren Turner and Chad Hudson.

In 1942, the Boys Club was one of a total of 360 boys clubs engaged in a government waste paper salvage campaign. They collected 40 tons of waste paper for national defense. It was ranked the second club in the nation. ther are many more stories in the booklet

Enough. I have told you everything that i know and some things I don't. Talk to me.

2018-03-16

By Joe Skvarenina

Phil Hunt writes , "I have heard you might be working on a project about early churches in Hancock County and wanted to send you information on Currys Chapel Church. The attached history describes the founding of the church in 1828. The second sheet gives the details of the 1955 addition of a kitchen, inside restrooms and dining area/classrooms. The most recent 1995 addition is the activity center with a new kitchen, restrooms, classrooms and dining area/gym."

In my opinion Curry's Chapel is the oldest continuing church in Hancock County. The church was founded by Isaiah Curry in 1828. Curry had 4 daughters and ten sons and settled northeast of the small community of Greenfield. More family and others joined with Mr. Curry in worshipping in their cabins. In 1840 James Parks , a charter member built a two story hewed log house and fitted the upstairs to hold meetings. This place for worship stood southwest of the present church and was used until 1842. In that year the congregation built hewed log cabin which was called Curry's Chapel because so many Curry's went to it. This house was built on land donated by James Parks and William Bridges. It was used for twenty five years as a place of worship. In 1867 it was torn down and a frame church was built on the same site. This church was dedicated by Rev. James McMullin and was used as a church for thirty three years. In 1909 the building was torn down and the present brick structure was built at a cost of \$4200. Over the years many improvement have been made to the church.

The 1840's membership included James Harvey Curry, Clavin Curry, Morgan Curry, Austin Curry, William Curry, Bromwell Curry, Madison Curry, J. M. Curry, William Martindale, James Parks, Moses Vanglider. How many Curry's go Curry's Chapel now? They have great chicken noodle dinners!

Enough. I have told you everything that I know and some things I don't. Talk to me.

****Includes 3 images**



Currys Chapel History

As Respectfully Submitted by Cassius M. Curry, and Dedicated to the
Honor of J.K.P. Martindale and all others interested
in the Welfare of the Church.

The foundation of this church in Spirit was laid exactly one hundred years ago. The year of 1828 brought Isaiah Curry with a strong family of ten children, six sons and four daughters, who settled about four miles northeast from the very few log cabins called Greenfield. Many of their Curry relatives soon followed and also built their cabins. They held their cabin meetings though widely separated, and were eagerly joined by many other God fearing pioneers and loyal neighbors who wandered through the dense woods for miles to worship. No religion has ever been like it.

Currys Chapel as a church edifice was organized in 1840. The leading members at that time were: James Harvey Curry, Calvin Curry, Morgan Curry, Austin Curry, Willson Curry, Bromwell Curry, Madison Curry, J.M. Curry, William Martindale, James Parks, Moses Vangilder and Jacob Tague, and their wives. At first they had no place to worship except in their cabins, but shortly after organizing, James Parks, one of the charter members, built a two-story hewed-log house, and fitted the upstairs to make it suitable for holding meetings. This house stood only a short distance southwest of the present church and was used until 1842. In that year the members built a hewed-log church, which was called Curry's Chapel because so many of the Curry's belonged to it. This house was built on land donated by James Parks and William Bridges. It was used as a place of worship for twenty-five years or until 1867 when it was torn down and a frame church was erected on the same-site. The members at this time were William Taylor, William Brooks, Isaiah A. Curry, William Bridges, William Winn, Thomas West, Thomas B. Miller, the Martindales, Tagues, Stuarts and Martins. This church was dedicated by the Rev. James McMullin and was used as a place of worship for thirty-three years, or until the year 1900, when it was torn down and the present brick church was erected at a cost of about four thousand two hundred dollars.

The Board of Trustees at that time was composed of Richard Frost, Carson Alexander, Edward Martin, Robert Briles and J.K.P. Martindale. These members also composed the building committee.

This church was dedicated by the Rev. Lamport, of Richmond, Indiana. It has now been eighty-eight years since this society was organized, and there has never been a single year in all this time that the church has not had a regular pastor. And during these eventful years there has been a regular attendance and they have kept the faith.

Presented to Curry's Chapel Church, by J.K.P. Martindale, and Sarah, his wife
August 27th, 1928, on Mr. Martindale's 83rd Birthday Anniversary.

Maxwell, Indiana
January 12, 1955

Dear Friend,

I wrote to you in April regarding a congregational meeting to be held in Curry's Church, to consider remodeling and building an addition to the church. This letter is to announce another meeting to be held January 30, 1955 to observe the completion of the project. The Sunday School will meet at 9:45 with a morning worship service at 10:45. There will be a fellowship meal at noon, so bring your two loaves and five fishes. The afternoon service will include the usual home coming service and the formal reopening of the church for worship and study. The district superintendent, Reverend Ernest Lawshe, will be present, and we are asking former ministers to bring greetings.

You must see the church to appreciate the changes which have been made. As you approach the church from either direction, you may not notice too much difference in outside appearances, but once inside, you become aware of a complete metamorphosis. One has said, "An outdated building has become a modern sanctuary." This has been accomplished by vision, consecration, and the donation of labor and money. The total cost will approximate \$11,500. The trustees and building committee found it necessary to negotiate a construction loan of \$3,000, but with your continued interest and giving, this loan should never be embarrassing.

And now this added word, lest we be accused of boasting. No church plant is an end in itself. It is only one of the tools through which we seek to evangelize and Christianize the community. The church stands as a symbol of our interest in the moral and spiritual welfare of people. In that troublesome incident in which Jesus threw the moneychangers from the temple, let us remember that His concern was for the people whom the moneychangers were exploiting, rather than upon the desecration of the temple. May we here resolve to center our attention upon people and their needs, rather upon the church building. My prayer is that the people who worship in Curry's Chapel church shall be a vital unit of the Church Universal.

I, personally, invite you to share every service of the church as well as the service on January 30, 1955.

Yours in His service,

Frank E. Vincent

2018-03-09

By Joe Skvarenina

I am looking for information about Elijah Tyner. I have written about him before but I cannot seem to get beyond the basics. He had a store and nursery in Blue River Township. He died on 2/1/18 but I cannot find an obit. His sale was 3/19/1872 in Morristown and was conducted by James and William Tyner. The sale included horses, cattle, corn in the crib, wheat hay in the mow, wheat growing, two horse wagon and harness, a general assortment of farming implements including reaper, grain drill, mower, wood saw and household furniture. I also know that Tyner designed the first county seal. What do you know? Also Mary Greenan is looking to write a piece on the old County Home. She would like some stories on people who lived there. Do you know of any?

Every year the Riley Memorial Association invites me to assist in laying a wreath on the Riley's grave on his birthday. At that time we inevitably discuss Riley's final resting place. When he died on July 22, 1916 there was great deal of controversy about his final resting place between Greenfield and Indianapolis. It was assumed that his final resting place would be Greenfield. But his brother in law Henry Eitel and some influential citizens of Indianapolis had other ideas. You see Riley died without a will and instructions on what to do with his remains. Mr. Volney T. Malott President of the Board of Crown Hill and Chairman of the Board of Indiana National Bank offered Eitel the most beautiful site in Crown Hill and the highest point in the Indianapolis for a final resting place. Greenfield made similar offer for Park Cemetery near his parents on the Mound which is Park Cemetery highest point over Brandywine Creek. The funeral was held on July 25, 1916 and Riley's body was held at the Gothic Chapel at Crown Hill until a final resting place could be determined. Eitel finally decided on Crown Hill. Riley was buried on October 17, 1917. It is interesting to note that two sets of human bones were found at the site when Riley's grave was being excavated. They were moved to another section of the cemetery.

Enough. I have told you everything that I know and some things I don't. Talk to me.

2018-03-02

By
Joe Skvarenina

Dan Coleman writes, "I am visiting family for the holidays from my present home in Georgia, and read your" Back In Time" article on Tom Black. I lived across the street from Mr. Black when I was growing up, so I got to know him a tad. (My family still lives in the same neighborhood, too) We kids were always wary of Mr. Black, but I learned he had a heart of gold and was very affable, even to the neighborhood kids. His house was always kind of a scary place to us, and we even had a tale that he had his dead wife stashed in the house somewhere! Ah, kids and their imaginations. I only got to go inside once, but remember it as kind of a grand place. I remember one time he invited me into his barn behind his house (it's gone now) and the memory I have is of all the books that he had stored in there! He told me that he had written some of them, and several were written in French. I also recall Bozo, and yes, that dog would only respond to French. Fascinating to me, for sure! Also, along the front of his house were several catalpa trees. One year there was a population explosion of 'catalpa worms' - actually caterpillars. I collected dozens and sold them on the sidewalk in front of my Spring St. house. (My final customer bought about 6 dozen and wiped me out!) I'm glad the mulberry tree (which is the largest in the state, too, I believe) is still thriving. Magnificent specimen! Anyway, thanks for the article on Mr. Black as it brought back some good memories, which I also recall whenever I visit and see his house." The Black house is on the corner of Spring and Douglas streets

Tom's brother Richard was an acclaimed artist and one of his painting is in the Hancock Public Library. Tom was the youngest of the four Black children of Richard Alexander and Ione Brown Black. Mother was originally from Milton Indiana but had grown up in Greenfield and had attended local Greenfield schools. Ione had many friends in town including the younger brother of James Whitcomb Riley. She met her husband at a party given by Albert "Abe" New. He had moved to Greenfield and had worked in the offices of Benjamin Harrison in Indianapolis. Richard and Ione were married in 1884 in Aurora Indiana and returned to Greenfield where all their children were born in the house on Douglas Street. Father Richard was killed in a street car accident.

Enough. I have told you everything that I know and some things I don't. Talk to me.

2018-02-23

By
Joe Skvarenina

Greg Murphy writes "I read your article in the Reporter tonight about Charles O'Donnell. I was interested so I did some research and your right, not much about Greenfield. However, his parents, Neil and Margaret O'Donnell were married in Hancock county in 1869. The family lived here until after Charles was born in 1884 and moved to Kokomo sometime before 1900.

As you know, we have no 1890 census. I found Neil O'Donnell's death certificate stating his parents were Michael and Ellen O'Donnell. Ellen's maiden name was difficult to read but I think her maiden name was Shalloy. "

Farther O'Donnell was born at Slab town in the Greenfield area which I think was a one room school house near the Indiana Box plant. The family did move to Kokomo when he was 6 years old . He became a priest and was President of Notre Dame University for six years. He was also a poet and served as a Chaplain during WW I. He died on June 4, 1934 and he is buried in South Bend. There is a plaque on Rev, Charles O'Donnell on a rock in Riley Park in the vicinity of the Senior Center and the Park's office as you walk up to the front door in a flower bed.

Greg also writes "my Mom shopped at George "Swifts Grocery" on the corner of School St. and I think 4th St. I always asked for their animal crackers! It was located just south of the old GHS Gym. Today the building has been converted to a house
She also shopped at Ted "Shively's Grocery" on Douglas, he was in business several years."
There were many small groceries in Greenfield at one time. Do you remember of the names and locations of any of them? I know Gorman's was on Pennsylvania Street and now an used appliance story.

Bob Jacobs stopped in the library the other day. He is Wayne Jacob's son. Wayne was a historian and Bob wanted to add to the Gappen story. It seems that Mr. Gappen was missing or had an artificial leg but could climb trees faster than anyone according to his step grandfather, Eddie Bader. Gappen could also fix anything. I have been told that Bader was a WW I hero, do any of you know?

Enough. I have told you everything that I know and some things I don't. Talk to me.

1. Write the name of the disease which caused the death. If the patient had pulmonary tuberculosis and died from hemorrhage of the lungs, write pulmonary tuberculosis as the disease causing death, and pulmonary hemorrhage as the contributory cause.

SUGGESTIONS TO PHYSICIANS RELATIVE TO STATEMENT OF CAUSES OF DEATH.

PLACE OF DEATH		Indiana State Board of Health.		298
County of <u>Harmon</u>		CERTIFICATE OF DEATH		
Township of <u>Center</u>		Registered No. <u>505</u>		
Village of <u>Kokomo</u>		Ward <u>1</u>		
City of <u>Kokomo</u> (No. <u>227 S. Pauline St.</u>)		If death occurred in a hospital or institution, give the name, number of ward and number.		
[If death occurs away from usual residence give facts called for under "Special Information."]		FULL NAME <u>Irish O'Donnell</u>		
PERSONAL AND STATISTICAL PARTICULARS		MEDICAL CERTIFICATE OF DEATH		
SEX <u>Male</u>	COLOR <u>White</u>	DATE OF DEATH <u>Oct 15</u> 190 <u>7</u>		
DATE OF BIRTH <u>—</u> <u>—</u> <u>1897</u>		I HEREBY CERTIFY that I attended deceased from <u>Oct 5</u> 190 <u>7</u> to <u>Oct 10</u> 190 <u>7</u> that I last saw him alive on <u>Oct 10</u> 190 <u>7</u> and that death occurred, on the day stated above, at <u>7:30</u> P. M. The CAUSE OF DEATH was as follows:		
AGE <u>12</u> years <u>—</u> months <u>—</u> days		<u>Chronic</u> <u>Bronchitis</u> <u>secondary</u>		
SINGLE, MARRIED, WIDOWED, OR DIVORCED <u>Married</u>		Contributory		
NAME OF HUSBAND OR WIFE <u>Mary</u>		<u>George J. Hayslett</u> <u>Oct 9</u> 190 <u>7</u> (Address) <u>Kokomo</u>		
BIRTHPLACE OF DECEASED <u>Ireland</u>		SPECIAL INFORMATION (Give all diseases, injuries and traumas.)		
NAME OF FATHER <u>Michael O'Donnell</u>		Place of Birth <u>Ireland</u> Date of Birth <u>—</u>		
BIRTHPLACE OF FATHER <u>Ireland</u>		Where and when received (If not at date of birth)		
MOTHER MARY <u>Ellen Hallow</u>		PLACE OF BIRTH OR RECEIPT <u>—</u> (Date of Birth) <u>—</u>		
BIRTHPLACE OF MOTHER <u>Ireland</u>		LASTED <u>—</u> No. of LICENSE <u>—</u>		
OCCUPATION OF DECEASED <u>Loam-worker</u>		ADDRESS <u>—</u> RESIDENCE <u>—</u>		
THE ABOVE STATED PERSONAL PARTICULARS ARE TRUE TO THE BEST OF MY KNOWLEDGE AND BELIEF				
(Informant) <u>Charles O'Donnell</u>				
(Address) <u>Kokomo</u>				
SIGNED BY <u>W. H. Hartshorn, M.D.</u>				
<u>Per Jas. L. Hartshorn, M.D.</u>				

DESCRIPTION OF APPLICANT.

Age: 46 years
 Sex: Male
 Height: 5 feet 2 inches
 Weight: 145 lbs
 Eyes: Brown
 Hair: Brown
 Complexion: Fair
 Name: George Allen
 Distinguishing marks: Scar on forehead

CERTIFICATION.

I, _____, solemnly swear that I am a _____ citizen of the United States; that I reside at _____; that I have known the above-named _____ for _____ years and know him to be a native citizen of the United States; and that the facts stated in his affidavit are true to the best of my knowledge and belief.

Sworn to before me this _____ day of _____, 19____.

Applicant desires passport to be sent to the following address:

1415 Atlantic
 Chicago, Ill.

RGR

I signed before me the passport to be issued to the applicant, and I certify that the facts stated in his affidavit are true to the best of my knowledge and belief.



George Allen

244198

FROM FOR NATIVE CITIZENS.

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

DEPARTMENT OF STATE
 PASSPORTS
 JAN 13 1978
 WASHINGTON

I, Charles O. Stewart, a NATIVE and NATAL CITIZEN OF THE UNITED STATES, hereby apply to the Department of State, at Washington, for a passport.

I solemnly swear that I was born at _____ in the State of _____; that I am now residing at _____; that I have resided outside of the United States from the year of _____ to _____; and that I have resided outside of the United States for the following periods:

from _____ to _____; that I am now residing at _____; that I have resided outside of the United States from the year of _____ to _____; and that I have resided outside of the United States for the following periods:

from _____ to _____; that I am now residing at _____; that I have resided outside of the United States from the year of _____ to _____; and that I have resided outside of the United States for the following periods:

from _____ to _____; that I am now residing at _____; that I have resided outside of the United States from the year of _____ to _____; and that I have resided outside of the United States for the following periods:

from _____ to _____; that I am now residing at _____; that I have resided outside of the United States from the year of _____ to _____; and that I have resided outside of the United States for the following periods:

from _____ to _____; that I am now residing at _____; that I have resided outside of the United States from the year of _____ to _____; and that I have resided outside of the United States for the following periods:

from _____ to _____; that I am now residing at _____; that I have resided outside of the United States from the year of _____ to _____; and that I have resided outside of the United States for the following periods:

from _____ to _____; that I am now residing at _____; that I have resided outside of the United States from the year of _____ to _____; and that I have resided outside of the United States for the following periods:

from _____ to _____; that I am now residing at _____; that I have resided outside of the United States from the year of _____ to _____; and that I have resided outside of the United States for the following periods:

2018-02-16

By
Joseph Skvarenina

I am the Chairman of the Fund Raising Committee for expanding the meeting and restroom space for 'Lizabeth Ann's Kitchen at the Riley Home in Greenfield. Several organizations use the site for meetings, seminars or community events. It also used by school groups for lunch or as a gathering area. The ROHS is sorely in need of new restrooms and expanded space to benefit community usage. AS you know, The mission of the James Whitcomb Riley Old Home Society (ROHS) is to serve present and future generations for cultural and educational purposes including the advancement of knowledge of the life and works of James Whitcomb Riley, the Hoosier poet. In furtherance of such cultural and educational purposes our objective is to collect and interpret artifacts and literature which affect the cultural era of of poet's lifetime and works. ROHS is a 501 C 3 and is in collaboration with the city of Greenfield under the Parks and Recreation Department.

On December 19, 1934 the City of Greenfield City Council founded the Riley Old Home Society to preserve the James Whitcomb Riley birthplace for prosperity. On July 15, 1936 the home was purchased from the heirs and was opened to the public on May 17, 1937. In 1976 the property next door, which is the former residence of John Mitchell, was purchased and added as a museum. The purpose of this museum is to display memorabilia of Riley.

In the late 1970's the Riley old Home Society began work on transforming a 1920's garage at the back of the Mitchell House into 'Lizabeth Ann's Kitchen. The initial purpose was to provide a shelter for receptions, gathering place for tours, celebrations and meetings with a kitchen for preparing food. 'Lizabeth Ann's kitchen currently holds only 20 people and has a very small public restroom. The ROHS is planning an additional expansion of 'Lizabeth Ann's Kitchen which would enable the ROHS to better serve the public. The purpose of the project is to enlarge the capacity for service to the public and add adequate handicapped public restrooms and assembly space for 'Lizabeth Ann's Kitchen. The total cost of the project is \$172,500. We recently received a grant from the Hancock County Tourism for \$50,000 and the Greenfield City Council for \$50,000. But we still need more funds to complete the effort. If you are interested let me know.

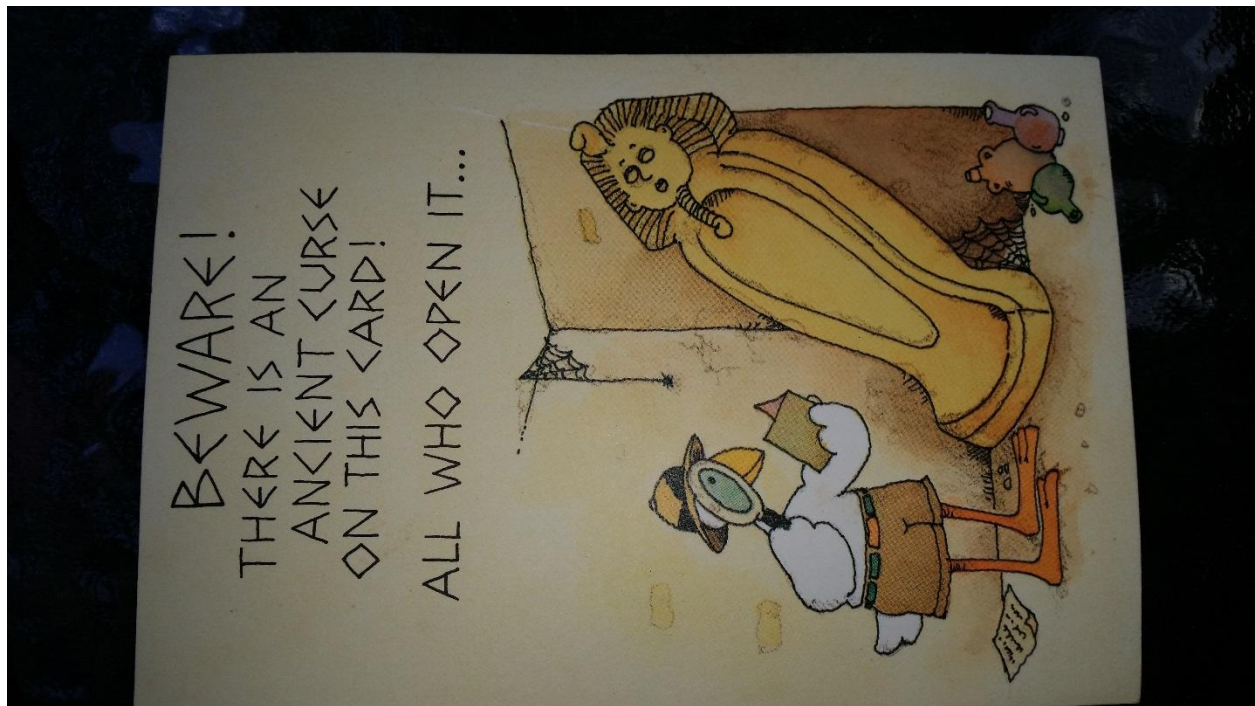
Enough. I have told you thieving that I know and seem things I don't. Talk to me at Jskvarenina@hotmail.com or C/O the Daily Reporter.

2018-02-09

By
Joe Skvarenina

David Harrison so kindly provides us with a birthday card that Charlie Fox produced and sent to Harrison's daughter, Amy. Charlie Elmer Fox, was known as the King of the Road. He was a hobo. This card properly called hobo art, was very popular during the great depression. In the 1980's Fox wrote a column for the Daily Reporter and one of two books called "Weeds you can eat and other good things". He was born June 6, 1913 in a log cabin on the Erie Canal one half mile west of the Big Wabash River in Vigo County. He was a naturalist, forager and early in his life, a hobo who lived of the bounty of the land traveling on the railroad. He was the oldest of nine children and was a welder for 39 years. He claimed to be a mixture of Irish, Scotch, Welsh, German, English and Delaware Indian descent. He was married with five children and lived in Charlottesville. In his later years. In one of his columns in the Daily Reporter entitled "This good guy wear white hats" he familiarized us with hobo lingo. For example a "shack" was the head brakeman or a railroad detective who traveled on the moving stock or a "yard dick" who was railroad detective assigned to patrol the railroad yard. A "bum" in hobo lingo was a petty thief and a "jack roller" was one who was into major larceny. Sometimes word meanings would change between districts. I have been told there was a hobo site east of Charlottesville long the National Road. Does anyone know about it? I wished I would have saved Charlie's columns, did any of you? Charlie's second book was a major sociological study of Hobo life put out I think by the University of Oklahoma.

Enough. I have told you everything that I know and some things I don't. Talk to me.





Joe B. Funkhouser
80 Oughty 80 Baker Ave.
Medtskin, Arkansas

...TURN
ONE YEAR OLDER!

(DON'T FEEL BAD,
I OPENED IT
AND IT WASN'T EVEN
MY BIRTHDAY!)

*Wishing you The Best of
Everything For The Next 90 yrs.
Then you are on your own.
Your Friend*

Charlie Fox



"REEFER CHARLIE"
GRAND DUKE
of the hoboes
A KNIGHT OF THE ROAD



CHARLES E. FOX
Post Office Box 44
CHARLOTTESVILLE, IN 46117



USA
20c

*Miss Amy Harrison
R.R. 1 Box 98
Greenfield, Ind. 46140*

2018-02-02

by
Joe Skvarenina

My father was a depression baby born in 1926. You could really tell because he saved string, straightened nails, along with saving aluminum foil, and used bread bags. You know the type. The children of the depression wasted nothing. It was hard times and they never forgot it. During the 1920's the Great Depression was slow to come to Hancock County and when it did there was little warning. The first indication is when the tax assessor's report in the first half of the 1930's showed a decrease in taxable income. The result was call for a tax cut. Before the early thirties, three banks had failed and unemployment was increasing and some businesses cut back to five days a week. The Framers National Bank of Wilkinson was the first to go under on September 19, 1930. The Fortville State Bank was closed to a receivership April 18, 1931. The Citizens Bank of Charlottesville was closed on March 30, 1934. According to one publication six banks were operating in Hancock County at the end of the thirties. Also on March 1931 the T.H.I. & Traction Line or Interurban which ran through Greenfield to Indianapolis was a victim to the economic downturn.

Here is a list of some of the banks in the county at the time and when the banks were founded: Greenfield Banking Company 1871, First National Bank of Fortville 1906, Citizens Bank of Greenfield 1873, Capital State Bank 1898, Mohawk State Bank 1903, Willow Branch Bank 1913, New Palestine Bank 1892/1897, Hughes Bank 1881, Fortville State Bank, 1891, Farmers Bank Wilkinson and 1915 Citizens Bank Charlottesville 1913. You travel around the smaller towns and still see the older buildings in Mohawk, Wilkinson and Willow Branch. This information provided courtesy "A History of Banking in Hancock County Indiana 1871-1976." Did Fortville at one time print their own currency?

Enough. I have told you everything that I know and some things I don't. Talk to me.

2018-01-26

By
Joe Skvarenina

Well it is finished! Paul McNeil, Cindi Faunce and I have just finished the definitive history of 125 years of the Hancock Public Library. In 1878 W.H. Simms , superintendent of the city schools decided that Greenfield needed a library. In November, 1879 an association was organized to see that it happened. Students went door to door to collect extra books that people might be able to spare. When the high school moved into a new building on North and Pennsylvania street in 1895, a room was dedicated for a library. The room was located on the first floor just north of the hall. Today you see just the arches of that old school. Later the Greenfield Library was officially organized Jan. 5, 1898 and open to the public. There were 1500 volumes and 10 magazines available. The first librarian was Minnie Hughes and she served for three years. The library began looking for a new location in 1906. Malissa Cooper owned a lot on North Street which she donated for library use. This was the site of her old homestead. Andrew Carnegie, philanthropist, donated \$10,000 to build a new library which was constructed 1908-1909. The total cost was \$12,500. Inside the Carnegie building now Carnegie's Restaurant there is a tablet which reads "Andrew Carnegie gave ten thousand dollars to erect this building. The ground was donated as a memorial to Malissa Cooper." The lower hall which is now the site of the restaurant was called Harris Hall in honor of Lee O. Harris. Harris was a teacher and a civil war veteran. At one time a portrait of Harris was hung in the hall given by the City Federation of Clubs. I don't know if it is still there. The School Board ran the library until May 1917 when the Library became a separate entity.

Enough. I have told you everything that I know and some things. I don't Talk to me at jksvarenina@Hotmail.com or the Daily Reporter.

2018-01-19

By
Joe Skvarenina

Mark Holden writes, " I re-read my original email. The other location was east of Grigsby not west. It was across the current alley. The facade of the other west building is quite distinctive." I still think the A.A. Gappen Sporting Goods and Harley Shop was in Grigsy's Station. I know Gloria from Red Ribbon thought the same. Does anyone know anything different and can prove me wrong? But Paul McNeal from the Hancock County Public helped us find out more information about A.A. Gappen, the person. He died March 5, 1957 when he was hit by a car on Main Street while dashing between cars. This was the second time he was hit in this fashion. He attended South Srteet Methodist Church and he is buried in Park Cemetery In Greenfield. Mr. Gappen was born born 10/ 13 /1879 in Blue River Township to Eli Gappen and Mildred Holder. He was survived by two sisters and one brother Samuel. He was known to be able to fix about anything. He was a mechanical genius. At one time he was in Central State Hospital and he kept everything at the hospital in running order. Gappen when he retired sold put his shop to Pickett's Hardware. During the gas boom era in Greenfield, which started about 1887, he was a well driller and a gravel pit operator.

In 1886 the first natural gas company formed and was called the Greenfield Gas Company. The first well was struck on May 3, 1887 on west Fifth Street in Greenfield. After that 43 other natural gas companies were founded in town. It was estimated the 1,000 men worked in gas related industries. Greenfield offered free gas to businesses who would located in town. The local gas boom era in Greenfield was from 1887to 1915.

Enough. I have told you everything that I know and some things I don't. Talk to me jskvarenina@hotmail.com or c/o of the Daily Reporter.

2018-01-12

By
Joe Skvarenina

Mike Holzhausen writes."Enjoyed your comments about the tomatoes in Hancock County. I worked in the Coddington factory during tomato season one summer. It was probably 1961 when I was still in high school at Mt. Comfort. It was in the building that is now Monroe Custom Bodies (MCB). The factory manager or foreman at that time was Maynard Brown. I remember that there was a tomato loading point, probably for other factories, on the northwest corner of Mt. Comfort Road (600) west and 200 N." I had mistakenly placed Coddington's in the old Mount Comfort Fire station in an earlier column.

Don Freeman also called and said his father was a tomato farmer probably in Brown and Jackson Townships. He tells that there were canning factories also in Carthage, Greenfield , Shirley, and two in Morristown. Tomatoes were an important crop in Hancock County in the early 1930's until the 1970's

For many years the chief industry of Hancock County was agriculture and the small family farm. Myron E. Cromer was the county's first extension agent beginning his work in 1918. At first his office was at the top of the Hancock County Courthouse. Later after its completion the extension office it was moved to the Memorial Building. According to some Cromer introduced the soybean to Hancock County. He was also active in establishing the Hancock County Farm Bureau. The Richman History tells us in 1840 corn was the biggest crop followed by oats and wheat. In 1840s wine were the most important livestock followed by sheep and cattle which were soon tied for second place. Today the farms are larger and the important crops are soy beans and corn followed by a distant wheat. Swine are still important for the county. In the 1920's mechanized farming took hold the farmers became less dependent on horses. Today the farms are larger in the county.

Enough. I have told you everything that I know and some things I don't. Talk to me at jskvarenina@hotmail.com or c/o the Daily Reporter.

2018-01-05

By
Joe Skvarenina

Mark Holden writes, "You wrote an article in the October 6 Reporter about the Harley Davidson store that was located in the Griggsby's Station building. It was interesting to read another article about this store. Augustus Adolphus Gappen (A.A. Gappen), also known as 'Doomer', is my great great uncle. We are related through my father's father side of the family. Gappen was my grandfather mother's maiden name.

Recently, I've been working to learn more about my great great uncle. We have some family photos of him with his motorcycles and friends. My father also found some additional photos at the Greenfield library. Two photos even showed the inside of his shop. They show both the sporting goods side and the Harley Davidson/bicycle side of his shop. The photos also show that at one time his shop was located in the building just west of Griggsby's Station."

Mark would like to know more about Gappen's. What do you know? Share it with us. I still think it was located at the site of Griggsby Station as the address is the same in one of the old telephone directories. It could have also been located in the building west of Griggsby's Do you have a definitive answer? Also I spent the afternoon going through newspapers and I see two addresses for Gappens, 10-12 Mount Street which would be on the alley and 101 West Main which makes the mystery deepen. I looked for an obit for Augustus and couldn't find any. But Gappens sporting goods did buy ads in the paper from 1905-1917. In 1913 it was announced that they sold a Harley Davidson. They also sold erector sets, guns, rifles, hunting coats, fishing tackle, revolvers, shaving straps and bikes from \$25 to \$35. They also sold Firestone Tires and Iver Johnson Bikes which much have been special. In 1913 Mr. Gappen paid \$1.25 to the school fund. Gappens ran ads in the Daily Reporter, Evening Republican, Hancock County Democrat and other newspapers in surrounding counties. Enough I have told you everything that I know and some things I don't. Talk to me.

****Update from Mark Holden:** "The other location was east of Griggsby not west. It was across the current alley. The facade of the other west building is quite distinctive."

****See January 19, 2018**

2017-12-29

By Joseph Skvarenina

Hugh Owen O'Donnell from Notre Dame writes, "I read your biography on Fr Charles O'Donnell of Notre Dame.

Do you know where his parents and grandparents are from...or can you find out." Very little is known about Father O'Donnell in Greenfield.

He was born in Hancock County in 1884 at Slabtown northwest of Greenfield. I think Slabtown was the a one room school district along Fortville Pike maybe in the area of the Indiana Box Company. My wife took me to the site where an old school was located near the factory. She says this might have been Slabtown. But I really don't know for sure?

A few years after his birth the family moved to Kokomo. He entered Notre Dame University in 1899 graduated in 1906 and would continue on for his Ph.D. He entered the priesthood and became a professor of English on the campus. He served in WW I and was called to serve as chaplain in 1917. Father O'Donnell returned to teach at Notre Dame and later served as President of the university from 1928-1934. He wrote several books of poetry. He is remembered at Notre Dame as an outstanding teacher, poet, writer and President of the University.

I have never been able to find much more about his Greenfield years and family. What do you know? There is a plaque in Riley Park near the parks office about O'Donnell.

Remember when there was about a grocery store on every corner. Shivey's was just down the street on the corner from where I live. According to my friend Charlie their doughnuts were 60 cents a dozen. Key Hole was a grocery on National Road. The owner was Ira Key and everyone went to that site from East Greenfield. There was also Jim Gorman's store on South Pennsylvania and now a used appliance store. The grand opening of Gorman's was on July 7, 1957. What store did your mother use?

Enough. I have told you everything that I know and some things I don't. Talk to me c/o jskvarenina@hotmail.com or the Daily Reporter

2017-12-23

By Joseph Skvarenina

There is an old house on Douglas Street with probably the biggest tree in Hancock County. That house is the old Black property. Tom Black was born on November 19, 1893. His father died in an Interurban accident when he was only six years old. Mr. Black was educated in both the United States and abroad. He received a Bachelor of Philosophy from the Lycee Henri IV in Paris. He also obtained a Master of Arts in Romance Languages from Columbia University. He spoke many languages. His brother Richard, was a famous artist

According to one newspaper account, "During WW I, Thomas Black worked for the American Red Cross. He worked with refugees along the Danube in Hungary and Romania and afterwards traveled many different roads across Algeria, Morocco, Mexico, Cuba...along the way he has held many jobs ranging from writer to Mexican truck gardener but always for one reason or another he returned to Greenfield." Mr. Black was a frustrated author. After many attempts, in 1973 his book 'Interlude Among the Berbery' was published. Tom Black's book is a novel stitched together with narrative short stories dealing with the adventures of Chester o'Neal, who of course, is from the midwest. All the stories are interlinked and hold the readers attention thru different levels of character development. According to Black, "He had a rough time getting published." Editors always seemed to give Tom one excuse after another though he has had newspaper stories published. Many writers would have given up their craft but not Tom Black. He did not quit over the years he kept on. In his 80th years his vision came thru and his novel was published by Vantage Press..

Over the years I have looked every place for a copy of his book. Guess what, I found one at an use book sale for \$1.00 and it is a real treasure. The real benefit was the newspaper article in it, also. Tom returned to Greenfield the last time after his wife died with his dog Bozo who could only understand French. Mr. Black was an active member of Hancock County Historical Society.

Tom Black's book was entitled the "Interlude Along the Coast of the Berbery". I have read it and its good reading. This was his first novel he claimed to be working on a second book which was "about Greenfield and how James Whitcomb Riley really was." I really don't think anyone has ever seen that manuscript. But I guess I will start looking for it. I do believe that the Berbery is present day Libya.

Enough. I have told you everything that I know and some things I don't. Talk to me c/o jskvarenina@hotmail.com or the Daily Reporter

2017-12-15

By Joseph Skvarenina

Charlottesville is in Jackson Township in the eastern portion of the county. Jackson Township has only two towns-Cleveland and Charlottesville. Both towns are located on the National Road, Route 40, which originally went from Cumberland Maryland to Vandalia Illinois when Congress ran out of funds to complete it. Americans went west on the National Road during its period of Manifest Destiny. The National Road was the first federal highway which was surveyed through Indiana in 1827 and constructed in Indiana in 1834 and 1835. Mary Landis, an early tavern keeper in Charlottesville, sat by her window and counted ninety prairie schooners going west on the national road. There was substantial benefit to towns located on the highway.

The original survey for Charlottesville Indiana was made by David Templton on June 6, 1830. In 1867 it was incorporated with a population of 254 including 64 voters. An election was held on October 7, 1867 at which J.H. Allison was elected clerk; Henry Morris, treasurer; Sylvester Baker assessor; John Girty, marshal along with three trustees. Its charter was forfeited in 1880 over financial problems. It never incorporated again. One rural free mail delivery route was established April 1, 1903. The first rural telephone exchange was in Charlottesville. There were Masonic, Odd Fellows, and Daughter's of Rebekah Lodges in the community. A brass band was organized into the community in 1869 or 1870. This band continued to play into the 1890's. There was a Citizen's Bank of Charlottesville along with a Charlottesville Burial Club which was organized January 27, 1912. Historically Charlottesville had Methodist, Christian, Lutheran, and Friends Churches. The Lutheran church which was founded in 1847 disappeared after several years of operation. The other churches still exist in some fashion.

In the 1900's the community had a grocery and a hardware. There was a famous Charlottesville-Wilkinson football rivalry for years. Charles Elmer Fox who was king of the hobos in the 1970's lived in Charlottesville in his later life. He wrote books and newspaper articles about living on the road.

Also I am looking for the items about the history of churches in Jackson Township. If you have anything please let me know.

Enough. I have told you everything that I know and some things I don't. Talk to me c/o jskvarenina@hotmail.com or the Daily Reporter

2017-12-08

By Joe Skvarenina

In the spring of 1918 a few young girls in Greenfield decided on establishing an organization for doing war work and also for fun. It was under the leadership of Miss Isabell Hughes. By the fall of 1918 the Brandywine Campfire Girls were on the way. In the spring they conducted a well attended matinee dance and \$10 was raised for the National Campfire organization. In the summer they sold flowers-and plants that were donated to the group by the women of the city. This effort raised three dollars which was given to the Red Cross. The girls also collected tin foil for the war effort and made scrap books for the soldiers. Boxes were placed in different stores where the tinfoil was deposited. It was later sold and the funds were given to the Red Cross. It was also the goal of the girls to buy Liberty Savings Stamps and some had purchased Bonds.

Members of the Brandywine Campfire girls included Madge Boyd, Elizabeth Elliott, Margaret Mullendore, Helen Service. Dorothea Duncan, Ruth Millikan, Winfred Pratt, Harriett Whitsell, Kathryn Grant, Esther Henby, and Dorcas Rock.

It is interesting to note when WW I broke out the German settlement in Sugar Creek Township was sympathetic to the Germans. Few believed the stories of German atrocities. But as soon as their boys went overseas and saw the carnage their attitudes changed. When the question of eliminating German from the schools Zion Lutheran Pastor Rev. Markworth gave his support. The German community was praised for their loyalty by State Representative George H. Cooper.

Enough. I have told you everything that I know and some things that I don't. Talk to me c/o jskvarenina@hotmail.com or the Daily Reporter.

2017-11-24

By
Joe Skvarenina

Historians call history told or written by less affluent members of society as history from the bottom rail. I am interested in finding out if immigrant farmers were used in Hancock County. Some say yes and the others no. I know that immigrant labors were used in the Carthage area on truck farms and there are barracks for living quarters still in existence. I know that German prisoners of war were used to pick tomatoes in the Greenfield area on the Service Engineering property. They were housed in Morristown and in old interurban cars south of Greenfield. They were given the hourly wage of fifteen cents an hour. I have been told that there were barracks for immigrant workers up the side street west of the Fortville Library.

During the 1920's Hancock County was in the middle of the a tomato growing area. Many of the smaller communities had canning factories. I know that there was canning factories in Shirley, Mt, Comfort and Greenfield. Around 1913 there was a canning factory on *Tague* Street at the location of the Indiana Box Company before it burned down. This canning factory was operated by farmer John Souder until about circa 1958. Coddington's Canning factory operated in Mt. Comfort. I believe it was in the old fire station on Mt. Comfort Road. Most of the farmers in Buck Creek went to Coddington's. Other Buck Creek famers went to the Buck Creek loading point for Stockley Van Camp. The tomato was an important crop in Hancock County until the late 1950's the early 1960's. But I find no record of immigrant labor. What do you know?

Enough. I have told you very thing that I know and some things I don't. Talk to me at jskvarenina@hotmail.com or the Daily Reporter.

Note: Please use the pic on page 36 bottom if Clara Lowder Beeson in my brown pictorial history of Hancock County

2017-11-17

By
Joe Skvarenina

Can you imagine, WW I was over 100 years ago? Built on the corner of North and East Streets the memorial building was dedicated September 20, 1923. The original building was dedicated September 30, 1923. Originally the second floor was devoted for use by the American Legion and Auxiliary. The ground floor was used for agricultural lectures and other community activities. Taylor Morford, a Civil War soldier and member of the GAR laid the cornerstone.

Prior to building of the Memorial Building a chicken hatcher was located at the site. Bonds were sold to finance the construction of the Memorial Building. Post #119 of the American Legion used it as its headquarters until 1951. The American Legion post was organized in 1921. The American Legion organized baseball teams, a drum and bugle corps started in 1931, a drill unit and many other activities at the site to preserve the relationships of former military members. The War Mothers of Hancock County placed a stone engraved plaque inside the building to listing those who died in WW I for all to read. Also a remembrance for WW I President Woodrow Wilson is also located at the site. Until October 16, 1942 two canons, an Austrian howitzer and small German field piece, were removed for the front lawn. Both cannons were used as scarp to be molded into new weapons. According to one Legionnaire in the 1920's the baseball teams, " played to crowds over 1,000 with other teams throughout Central Indiana and although winning many games that year, they were clobbered by the Knightstown nine." Today if you asked Legionnaires, the team of the early 1940's was the best.

Kurt Vettters is making an erstwhile effort to get the Legion going again .Support him and go look at the plaques in the Memorial Building. It is a good story lesson for the youngsters. Enough. I have told you everything that I know and some things I don't. Talk to me at jskvarenina@hotmail.com or the Daily Reporter.

Go to my book "Images of America Hancock County Indiana' p 23 there is a pic of the Memorial Building with cannons in front. The Brown book with the football team of the front

2017-11-10

Tecumseh

By
Joe Skvarenina

The Gooding Tavern was located on the southwest corner of State and Main Street in Greenfield at the current location of the City Hall. The early hotel was started in 1832 by Joseph Chapmen and later additions were added by Asa Gooding. It was managed for many years by Gooding's wife Matilda Gooding. In it's hay day many famous people stayed at the site. The Gooding Tavern was torn down in the 1920's and a Standard station was located at the site. In the 1960's the Peter Pan Diner was located there.

One famous person who resided at the Gooding was R.M. Johnson Vice President of the United States. I often wondered about him. Richard Mentor Johnson was the ninth Vice President of the United States. Johnson was elected to the House of Representatives in 1806, He and Henry Clay were members of the War Hawks faction that favored war with Britian in 1812. He was commissioned as a Colonel and he and his brother served with William Henry Harrison at the Battle of the Thames in Canada. Some report that he was the one who killed the Shawnee Chief Tecumseh. He later used the act for his political advantage. In 1836, Johnson was the Democratic nominee for Vice President of the United States on the ticket with Martin Van Buren. Their campaign slogan was 'Rumpsey, Dumpsey, Rumsey, Dumpsey, Colonel Jonson killed Tecumseh". He was one electoral vote short of securing office. The Virginia delegation abstained from voting. But however he was elected to office by the Senate. He has the distinction of being the only Vice President of the United States Senate chosen under the provisions of the Twelfth Amendment to the Constitution.

Enough. I have told you every thing that I know and some things I don't. Talk to me at jskvarenina@hotmail on c/o the Daily Reporter.

2017-11-03

By
Joe Skvarenina

John Rasor provides us with the history of Charlottesville United Methodist Church. In the early pioneer times services were held in a school house , one mile north of town on the west side of Six Mile Creek at the time on Marion White's farm. Later a small frame church was built at Six Mile cemetery two miles north of town. The building of this church cost seventy dollars and many other donations were made. It was dedicated by Rev. John B. Burt in 1838. Traveling preachers found their way to this church for many years When it became necessary to move church to town a school house on the east bank of Six Mile Creek served as the new sanctuary until the church in Charlottesville was built. James Foley of Foley's addition donated a lot and helped in the erection of a good size frame structure. This church was dedicated in 1855 by Rev. Cyrus Nutt. The building was remodeled in 1890. On June 25, 1902 the church was damaged by a great tornado. Pastor James Ruley and the people of the congregation began plans for a new church. The work began in August 1903. The cornerstone was laid September 21, 1903. The building was dedicated January 31, 1904. by Dr. William Parr. Rev. John T. Hatfield the "Hoosier Evangelist" for many years was a class leader and helped the church teach the doctrine of "Holiness". Also the Brown and McClarnon families were active participants in the congregation plus many dedicated clergy and lay people.

Don't forget to send me your congregation's history.

Enough. I have told you everything that I know and some things I don't. Talk to me c/o jskvarenina@hotmail.com or the Daily Reporter.

2017-10-27

By
Joseph Skvarenina

Have you ever gone to see the Jane Ross Reeves Octagon House in Shirley? It is quite a site and well worth the journey. The two story Octagon House at 400 Railroad Street have seen many changes over the years. built in 1879 by Jane Ross Reeves after her husband's death for herself and her ten children. It was erected on the road between Willow Branch and Wilkinson on family property. It was rumored that Jane sold the family silver saved in a shoe box to build her sixteen room house. In 1907 on Jane's death the house was sold and served as a place for farm workers to stay. In 1970's it was used as a cattle barn. In recent times it sat abandoned and the owner was going to allow it to be used if for fire practice. In 1997-1998 it was saved by the Jane Ross Reeves Octagon House Foundation. When it was moved to its new site in Shirley it still weighed 90 tons after the removal of the chimneys to reduce the weight. The house had four chimneys. One chimney served four rooms-two up and two down. At its new location it was also placed on a full basement. Thanks to that community spirited group of citizens who made it all possible. The house looks like it did when originally built.

There are only five octagon houses left standing in the state of Indiana. This one is special because it is restored with few changes except the porch. It is hoped that it will be used as a community center and it is available for tours. It is well furnished in the historic time period.

Enough. I have told you everything that I know and some things I don't. Talk to me c/o jskvarenina@hotmail.com or the Daily Reporter.

2017-10-20

By
Joe Skvarenina

I really appreciate the people of Shirley and they really make an effort to preserve the history of their community.

One particular person from Brown Township we don't hear much about is Benton Steele (1867-1946). He was known as the father of the Round Barns. He overcame the limits of a third grade education and was a skilled carpenter. He promote his efforts in the Indiana Farmer Magazine and other agricultural publications and helped the Round Barn movement reach the top of its success in 1910. Some claim that Steele may have first tried his hand on carpenter in 1879 when he worked on the construction of his great aunt's house, the Jane Ross Reeves Octagon Home.

Benton Steele was born in 1867 near the town of Warrington and Willow Springs (Willow Branch). When he turned fourteen, his family moved to Kansas but he stayed behind to work for a A.B. Thomas who owned the general store and managed the post office in Willow Springs. He developed a act for drawing and became an apprentice for a local man. He was known for expertise in drafting blueprints and plans. He submitted, I have been told, beautiful buildings drawings to agricultural magazines throughout the country. At the time of his death he wrote in an note, "The circular form of building is and always will be the ultimate of architectural form as well as the strongest shapes to be conceived by man..." There are two existing round barns in Hancock County and one octgon house. Enough. I know told you everything that I know and some things I don't. Talk to me c/o jskvarenina@hotmail.com or the Daily Reporter.

2017-10-13

By
Joe Skvarenina

Do you know about Will Vawter? He is a famous artist who lived in Greenfield and is buried in the Park Cemetery. he was known as an illustrator of Riley books with poets characters. His work appeared in magazines throughout the country. His paintings were also much admired. Vawter had a home and studio on East Street in Greenfield. It is to the north of the Memorial Building and the structure is still there. Today one local is a collector of Vawter and I have seen the paintings and they are really superb. By the way Vawter would also do drawings of local business and homes and they would appear on the front pages of the Hancock Democrat newspaper in the 1890's

Speaking of the Hancock Democrat Newspaper, Greenfield publisher and editor Walter Worland recently passed away. He will be missed. He was very civic minded. Long time Greenfield Rotarian, leader in the Masonic orders, city councilman, philanthropist and democratic party leader, he was always willing to be involved. Walter was an active contributor to this column. Good buy old friend.

An effort is beginning to bring more recognition to Vawter in town. I was wondering what you know about him? I would like to hear from you. Do you have any stories, know any sites significant to Vawter. What was the location of his downtown studio in town? I know after he left Greenfield he helped start the Brown County Art Colony. What do you know.

Enough. I have told you everything that I know and some things I don't. Talk to me c/o jskvareninian@hotmail.com or the Daily Reporter

2017-10-06

Lydia Swint writes, "My fiancé and I took a tour of the creative arts building downtown Greenfield. The group that put the tour together had old pictures on display. One of those pictures was of a Harley Davidson store in Greenfield Indiana. I thought I could find out more information about this store on the internet but I have not been able too. Today I read your article in the daily reporter and I noticed that you have a picture of the picture I saw. Can you please provide me more information about this Harley Davidson store and if I can obtain any pictures?"

The photo you are talking about is on the cover of my book entitled, "Then Now: Hancock County" It is of the A.A. Gappen Sporting Goods Store located on the south side of Greenfield's Main Street in the 1920's. Bicycles were an early mode of transportation offered by the shop. As motor cycles enveloped they became the shops lead sales item. Harley-Davidson , a name that is recognized to this day and was the brand they offered for many years. It is interesting to note what the shop sold is similar to what is seen in sporting goods shops today. For years the building that was A.A. Gappen was later known as the Red Ribbon Antique Shop and now Grisby's Station.

Jimmy Estelle writes that he remembers when the streets in Greenfield were Red Brick and the Interurban tracks ran down the middle of the Main Street. Also when Carol's Cafe was the bus station. I do believe that there are only two brick streets remaining in town one over by the Co-Op and the other next to the wedding chapel on North Street. Do you know of any others?

Enough. I have told you everything that I know and some things I don't. Talk to c/o jskvarenina@hotmail.com or the Daily Reporter.

2017-09-28

By
Joe Skvarenina

Charlie Glidwell writes, I really enjoy your articles. My book "Beyond the Badge" has some interesting information on Greenfield that I would like to share with your readers. (He writes to correct some information in my earlier article.)

The City of Greenfield was incorporated as a town in 1850 and incorporated as a City in 1876. I don't believe the Police Department was established until 1926 and the first Police Chief was John Francis Mulvihill who served as Police Chief from 1926 to 1928. Prior to 1926 Law Enforcement in Greenfield was a Town Marshall system with the first elected Town Marshall being N.P. Howard. The town Marshall was either elected or appointed. Up through the 1960s the Greenfield Police Department was indeed responsible for animal control and carried snares in the Police cars. The animal shelter was an old barn located on the hill just west of where the Fraternal Order of Police Lodge now sets. The Police Department has had four (4) Police Stations, the first being in the North West Corner of the County Court House, the second was in the newly constructed City Hall located at 110 South State Street, and had offices in the North east corner of City Hall, the third was at 23 West South Street, the fourth was when in 1977 the current Police Station was built at 116 South State Street where the Department is currently located.

With regards to the Greenfield Power and Light it was indeed located in a old brick house on South Riley Ave., after the Power and light Department moved out of the house it became the first home of the Hancock County Fraternal Order of Police where the F.O.P. remained until moving to its present location on 100 South.

Thank you for allowing me to share this information with you.

Charlie served for many years as Greenfield Police Chief. Enough. I told you everything that i know and some things I don't. Talk to me c/o skvarenina@hotmail.com or at the Daily Reporter.

2017-09-22

By
Joe Skvarenina

Bob Glazier writes my wife, Carolyn, read the other day that Indiana's tallest Governor is the present Governor, Governor Holcomb. Prior to him the tallest Governor was James "Blue Jeans" Williams who served from 1877 to 1880. But she cannot remember where she read it. Interestingly Governor Williams is my wife's great, great grandfather.

Eden Methodist Church history written by Harley Spurry and Ed Dunlavy tells us the very early history of Eden church was never written, but gathered from the old pioneers. Early church meetings were held in private homes of members including Thomas Dawson, Robert Walker and Robertson Jarrett. In 1838 a log church was built and in 1860 a frame structure was built for a cost of \$1500. In 1904 the present brick building was built at a cost of \$8,000. The cross in the pulpit area is made of native walnut by Newcomer Lumber and donated by Donna and Bill Paxton. In May, 1884 Elwood Barnard organized the first Sunday School conducted regularly with Lawrence Riggs as Superintendent. Barnard was the owner of the Barnard Sorghum Factory which had a capacity of 1,200 gallons of sorghum per day. The seasonal output would be twenty to thirty thousand gallons. The Barnard Family Orchestra consisting of Mr. and Mrs. Elwood Barnard, four daughters and one son became famous over the years and performed musical programs at many Chautauques in the United States and Canada.

Eden Church over the years has been blessed with very many donors who have made the upkeep and the expansion of the church possible. The first minister of the church was Stephen Masters and the current one is David Crittenden. The town of Eden at one time was called Lewisburg. It was laid out in 1835.

Currently on the first Saturday Eden Methodist has a free will offering breakfast with the proceeds to missions. Enough. I have told you everything that I know and some things I don't. Talk to me c/o jskvarenina@hotmail.com or the Daily Reporter.

2017-09-15

By
Joe Skvarenina

The photo is of Ruth Apple's old homestead on 100 south. Roy Wilson who now owns the property tells me that the place has at least five fireplaces. I believe this site was stage coach stop on the old Centerville Pike. Now according to the Binford History of Hancock County," the first road in the county was the old Indian Trail known as the "Napoleon Trace" which extended through Blue River, Jackson, and Green Townships crossing Blue River near Warrums old home at a place known as Stover's Ford." Do you know the location of Stover's Ford? I believe that part of the Napoleon Trace is today 700 east near the Westland Church. The first road running east and west through Greenfield was the old Centerville Pike State road which came into town from the east a short distance south of the National Road and probably where South Street is located today. I know that when the road went east of Greenfield it was on the current location of 100S on which the Apple property is located. Occasionally I hear old timers refer to the old National Road referring to the Centerville Road and later 100 South. I am convinced this is the case. In 1834-35 the National Road was opened, but was left unimproved with bridges and culverts with the road being graded but otherwise unimproved. In 1833 Greenfield had a population of 200 people to give you some perspective. The oldest road in Sugar Creek Township was the old Brookville and the old state Road. The Brookville Road was built even before the county was organized. Prior to the Civil War there was not a single gravel road in the township. After the Civil War 16 1/1 miles of toll pike were built by charter companies.

Enough. I have told you everything that I know and some things I don't. Talk to me c/o Daily Portiere or jskvarenina@hotmail.com

2017-09-08

By
Joe Skvarenina

Walter Worland provides us with a photograph of the old Masonic building which was located at the site of Joyner Homes on West Main Street here in Greenfield. This is their third home. The old Masonic Lodge was built by Hancock County Lodge No. 1 of Free and Accepted Masons. The cornerstone was laid August 14, 1854. The Masons occupied this building until a new temple, the current Performing Arts Center, was completed. The Presbyterians used the structure as a place of worship until their church was built on South Pennsylvania Street. At one time there was a school on the second floor of the building and James Whitcomb Riley attended some classes there. Also plays and other public meetings were held on the second floor. Businesses occupied the ground level.

In 1895 the second Masonic Temple was built with Renaissance Romanesque architecture which was very popular in the day. It had three floors and mercantile businesses like J Ward Walker's and others occupied the first floor. The second floor was rented for office space. The meeting room and lounge, and game room were on the third floor. There was an elevator in this building for easy access. Years later the county purchased the building for office space before it was sold as a performing arts center. The third masonic lodge is located on Tague Street.

Enough. I have told you everything that I know and some things I don't. Talk to me c/o the Greenfield Daily Reporter or Jskvarenina@hotmail.com

2017-09-01

By
Joe Skvarenina

The photo shows the inside of the cabin which Rick Edwards discovered and owns on 300 North. There have been many cabins discovered in Hancock County recently with other modern homes built around log homes. One example is the Eastes cabin at the Shambles in Cumberland. The Barnard cabin is next to Dale and Babe Kuhn's old homestead. The cabin once belonged to Cynthia Hayes Barnard who departed this life February 8, 1908. She was married to Franklin E. Barnard in 1842. They had eleven children with five surviving to adulthood. At the time of her death she had thirty six grandchildren and thirty three great grandchildren. Mr. Barnard died in 1886. The couple was from North Carolina and came to the Indiana in 1850 settling on the farm in Mohawk. She belonged to the Sugar Creek Methodist Church south of Mohawk. My wife, Cheryl, was raised next door to the cabin and she says the Cynthia was probably her great grandmother. Her father was Cecil Franklin Barnard commonly known as "Turk". Turk's house and land was on a portion of the Barnard farm so they were probably related. Thanks to local historian Greg Murphy for doing all the research on this pioneer family,

When organized in 1828 the county didn't have many people. At the first presidential election November 3, 1828 101 votes were cast. The entire population of the county was 400. At that time there were 135 school age children in the county. There was also only one clock in the entire county. This whole area was unbroken wilderness.

Enough. I have told you everything that I know and some things I don't. Talk to me at Greenfield Daily reporter or C/O jskvarenina@hotmail.com.

2017-08-25

By
Joe Skvarenina

The picture of the stairs is all that is left of the Westland store. It is at 600 east and 200 south. Tom Freeman tells us when he was a kid he and his friends would ride their bikes to the store for a warm bottle of soda pop. Yes, warm because the country stores usually didn't have refrigeration. When asked to write about Westland and Blue River Township Tubby Toms wrote Westland was the largest settlement in the township had at one time 25 residents. Around the turn of the century Westland had a general store , a blacksmith shop, and two natural gas wells. A mile west of the town was the first factory in the region and on the east banks of Nameless Creek as a watered power saw mill. A half mile north and a short distance east was where the first election was held in 1829 to elect a justice of the peace. Toms also told there where nine one room school houses in the township but with consolidation only Westland Consolidated School still remaining and it burned down in 1947. At the time Tubby indicated that 4 of the 9 building still remained and are still standing. These were being used as granaries and the forth was a tool shed. Shiloh and Hardy's School are of brick and Jessup's and Gates are of frame construction. I don't know if these buildings still survive. at one time in the township there where a half dozen churches. Today Westland Friends and Shiloh still remain. Tom Freeman tells that Westland Store was also known as Landis Store.

Enough. I have told you everything that i know and some things I don't. Talk to me c/o Greenfield Reporter of jskvarenina@hotmail.com.

2017-08-18

by
Joe Skvarenina

I pay tribute to my brother in law Bob Montrose by writing this column. He was a tool and dye maker most of his life and his family roots go deep in the annals of Hancock County History. His ancestor Plutarch Sistorious Montrose named for the famous Greek historian was born in Petroleum Center Venango county Pennsylvania on August 22, 1872, Plute came to Indiana as a gas well driller during the "gas" boom. He married Claudia Tyner in December 1894. Claudia Tyner parents were also earlier settlers in Hancock County. The Montrose family attended Mt. Lebanon Methodist Protestant Church. Claudia and Plutarch had six children with Harold, the only son, being Bob's father. Bob Montrose was born April 14, 1930. He was married to my sister in law Pamela Ann Barnard. They were married for 50 plus years. Bob would tell me stories about his participation in the early days of the Boys Club. He attend the club when it was in the old Lincoln school on south Pennsylvania Street or when it was in the basement of the old Riley School. Bob indicated he and some friends had heard Wendell Willike would be driving through town after his announcement that he was running for President was made in Elwood. Several people stood several hours at the corner of State and Main to see the famous Willike smile go by.

In 1942 members of the Waste Collection Corp of the Greenfield Boys Club amassed a total of almost 40 tons of scrap metal as part of the National Defense effort. The local club as known as the James Whitcomb Riley Foundation for Youth was the second ranking club in the nation for the paper collection campaign. Also as part of the National Defense effort the club delivered messages on their bikes at the request of the civil defense director.

Enough. I have told you everything that I know and some things I don't. Talk to me c/o Greenfield Daily Reporter or jskvarenina@hotmail.com

2017-08-11

By
Joseph Skvarenina

This is Tubby Toms home on the Hancock and Shelby County line just north of Morristown. The county line actually runs through the house. Some say that Toms had the county line painted through his house on the floor and his home office was in another county. William Lowell Tubby Toms attended DePauw University but interrupted his schooling in 1918 to join the Army Air Corps. Toms had an early interest in outdoor activities. He eventually became the outdoor nature editor for the Indianapolis News. He spent the last thirty years of his life writing his columns. He called his column "Out in the Open" and it first appeared February 15, 1946. He was reported to have fished very stream in Indiana. The Indiana Academy of Science mentioned his named six months after he passed away as an extremely accurate weather forecaster. His Great Nephew Tom Lund says that accuracy came from his "Toms Toe Meter" by which the weather was calculated based on the impact of the air pressure on the bunion on one of his feet. He was also an entertaining writer with a homespun philosophy. He claimed to be an accurate weather prophet by prophesying, "It must be spring. Snow drops are blooming and the owl has flown into the woods to sing lullabies and my goat is shedding its winter coat". He and his wife Adeline donated the land for the Nameless Creek Camp. The purpose of the camp was, "To help create recreational and camping opportunities; to increase the appreciation of nature and the enjoyment of the out of doors and outdoor sports for the youth of Greenfield." In 1941 Toms addressed the Kiwanis Club and declared that Indiana tomatoes had a better flavor than those of California. He had been hit in the mouth by both by hecklers with poor aim who tried to hit the candidates but usually missed and splattered the political reporters accompanying then." His talk called the "Easy Way" pointed out that reporters should keep calm for effective stories.

After years of hard use, Jerry Bell in 2006 became the President and leader of the loyalists of Nameless Creek and because of the hard work of many the camp experienced a Renaissance and is still in use today. Drive out and take a look. Nameless Creek could always use a donation. Enough. I have told you everything that I know and some things I don't. Talk to me c/o Greenfield Daily Reporter or at jskvarenina@hotmail.com.

2017-08-04

By
Joe Skvarenina

As citizen's of Hancock County we are all potentially served by our county library system. But it has not always been county wide. In 1985 the New Palestine Community library was established through the volunteer effort's of Phyllis Arthur, Linda Bond, Karen Harrell, Shirley Rifner and others. Officially opened on February, 1987 the library was housed on the lower level of the Mary M. Nichols Building at 11 East Main Street, New Palestine. Today that building is a museum. The Nichols Building had been leased to the American Legion of a \$1.00 per year. In 1986 the volunteer group had secured a loan of \$10,000 from the New Palestine Bank to renovate the building into a more formal library settings and to purchase books for the collection. Initially 10,000 tiles were purchases from the Indianapolis Public School system for \$500. In 1988 the group started the battle for tax payer support. At first the group looked into a possible merger with the Fortville Vernon Townships Library and also the Greenfield Public Library. In 1990 though the efforts of Senator Bev Gard and Representative Ray Richardson the residents of Hancock were allowed to voice their support for a Hancock County wide library service. After much discussion and effort on November 19, 1998 the Greenfield Public Library Board voted to annex Sugar Creek Township into its taxing district. The merger would increase Greenfield Public Library patrons by 79%. In the meantime Senate Bill 166 would create the option of allowing communities to use income tax revenues or County Economic Development Income Tax income. Prior to these libraries were funded through property tax. This new way of funding took the burden off of property owners. The bill was considered the brain child of County Commissioner Armin Apple. Both Gard and Apple can take major credit for our library system as it is today.

Enough. I have told you all that I know and some things I don't. Talk to me. Email jskvarenina@hotmail.com or c/o of the Daily Reporter.

2017-07-28

By
Joe Skvarenina

Elijah Tyner built a store in Blue River Township in 1833. It became the best known store in the early history of the county. In addition to Hancock, people would come from Rush and Shelby Counties to do their trading at the site. I believe that the location was on Morristown Pike and the buildings are still there. Tyner operated his store until 1872. Mr. Tyner migrated from South Carolina to Hancock County in 1820 and settled in our area before the county was organized in 1828. He had also lived in Kentucky and Franklin and Decatur Counties Indiana. In 1821 he entered eighty acres in Blue River Township, He was the third white man to make a land entry in the county. In 1822 Tyner married Mary Nelson who died in 1830. In 1832 he married Ann Hollerston, his third wife. Mr. Tyner was of pioneer stock and he arrived in the county within two years of the first settler. People say as a merchant he was honest and accommodating. In addition to being a merchant he was a farmer and stock trader. In 1822 he planted an orchard and was very interested in horticulture. He helped many of his pioneer neighbors to get their produce to market. He was a Baptist, Whig and Republican possibly in the that order. He had a large family and ultimately three wives. He is buried in the Shiloh Church Cemetery. The first land entry in the county was made by Harmon Warrum.

Enough. I have told you everything that I know and some things I don't. Talk to me. Write to jskvarenina@hotmail.com or C/O the Daily Reporter.

2017-07-21

by
Joe Skvarenina

Have you ever gone to the Westland store? It was the social hub of that community. Today all that is left is the steps. Westland was never laid out as a town. At least there is no plat in the recorders office. The first store at the site was erected by Samuel Heavenridge in 1852, It was a log building The Westland Store had a succession of owners in the early days including including Levi Reece, Ambrose Miller, Henry Newby, and Calvary Sample who closed the business at the start of the Civil War. Later it was reopened by William New, Lemuel Harold, Levi Cloud and James L. Binford. It burned April 13, 1881 but was rebuilt later in the decade. It was operated by M.A. Catt, John Howard, and Francis Landrus. I am sure that you might have known of some other owners, too? The store served as a blacksmith shop and post office until in 1900 Rural Delivery Route 3 was laid out from Greenfield. A huckster wagon also traveled from the Westland store. Tom Freeman from Superior Mowers said they used to ride their bikes to the store to buy a warm soft drink since there was no refrigeration at the site. So the store went into the 20th century. I don't know the final closing date for the store?

I need some help and maybe you know. Bob Cherry challenged me at the Lincoln Day Dinner to identify the tallest Governor from Indiana . I couldn't find the answer at the State Library. Do you have the answer?

Enough. I have told you everything that I know and some things I don't. Talk to me. Write jskaveranina@hotmail.com or C/O the Daily Reporter

2017-07-14

By
Joe Skvarenina

The other day at the Lincoln Day Dinner State Representative Bob Cherry challenged me to find out who was the tallest Governor. I enlisted the State Library and unfortunately, after checking numerous sources in the Indiana Collections, including newspaper databases, newspaper indices, clipping files, a subject index, and various Indiana trivia & fact books, we were unable to find the answer. After a call to the state Tour office, I have determined it is the current Governor Eric Holcomb who is 6'5" with the only closest being Governor "Blue Jeans Bill" aka James Williams who was 6'4". Williams was a democrat and a farmer. and prior to becoming Governor 1877-1880. He served in the General Assembly for 28 years. He was known for his frugality and advocacy of farm interests. His primary legislative accomplishments were the establishment of the first sinking fund and encouragement of establishment the State Board of Agriculture. He served on the Agriculture Board for sixteen years. He was also in active finding the funds to establish Purdue University. Williams also wrote the law that allowed women to inherit the estate of their husbands. He was known as a women rights activist. In addition he served in the Indiana Senate and the House in Representatives in Washington D.C. He married Nancy Huffman in 1831. She managed the 3,000 acre family farm near Vincennes. Williams often wore denim so his nickname became "Blue Jeans Bill". As he became wealthy he would have the denim lined in silk. During the Civil War era Williams was accused as being a copperhead. when he questioned Morton's Civil War spending He served four decades in public service.

Enough. I have told you everlasting that I now and some thing I don't. Talk to me jskvarenina@hotmail.com or C/O of the Daily Reporter.

2017-07-07

By
Joe Skvarenina

Do you know anything about Wendell Willkie? He is from Rushville. I have had the opportunity to meet his grandson David Willkie at the family home in Rushville the other day. I had seen David on the C span's Presidential series not so long ago and I decided to track him down. At the current time David has his own investment firm but has been active in government serving as staff for Richard Lugar's US Senate Foreign Relations Committee. David knows much about his grandpa and does an excellent job preserving his family heritage. Wendell ran as Republican Presidential candidate against Franklin Delano Roosevelt in 1940. Yes, the campaign headquarters were right in Rushville at the old Durbin Hotel which is now Senior Citizens housing. Can you imagine the excitement in Rush County. Willkie, a dark horse, had beat out Thomas Dewey, Herbert Hoover and Robert Taft for the GOP nomination. Mr. Willkie was born in Elwood Indiana and he accepted the nomination on August 17, 1940 in heat of 102 degrees before a crowd of 250,000 people gathered in an Elwood Park to hear his speech. This was the largest political rally in history. After his defeat FDR sent Willkie on a fact finding mission on the war around the world. The outcome of this 31,000 mile trip included a great deal of news coverage and publicity and resulted in a book called "One World" which sold one million copies and quickly went out of print. For his efforts Willkie was tabled as a champion for democratic self rule from the world.

Inscribed at his graveside at his graveside in Rushville are the words, "The moral lapses of expediency always outweigh the temporary gains." This was very interesting journey for me and David gave me a copy of "One World". I predict we will be seeing more of David Willkie.

Enough. I have told you everything that I know and seem things I don't. Talk to me.

2017-06-30

By
Joe Skvarenina

What do you know about City Services? In 1930 Greenfield Power and Light was begun in an old brick building on South Riley Avenue which I think it has been torn down. It generated its own power with three steam engines until 1949. In 1950 Power and Light it eased generating its own power and began purchasing it from Public Service Indiana. In 1983 Greenfield became of the Indiana Municipal Power Agency, a charter member. Also did you know until 1970 the Greenfield Police Department was responsible for animal control until a joint agreement was entered into with the county and Animal Control was established. The Greenfield Police Department was established in 1850 and N.P. Howard was the first Town Marshall. From the late 1930's until the 1950's the police department was located in the northwest corner of the Courthouse. A red light on the northeast corner of State and Main was the signal for cars to contact the department. Police cars in those days had no radio's. The Police department was later located in a house on West South Street before it moved into the newly constructed City Hall in 1956. It moved one more time to 23 West Street before the facility at 116 South State Street was built in 1997. Thanks to Pat Elmore for all these details. She knows all the details about city government.

I and Greg Roland are writing a revised history of the City Electric Utility on its upcoming anniversary. Do you have anything to share?

2017-06-23

by

Joe Skvarenina

Where is the German community located in Hancock County? According to the Zion Lutheran Church history, the original German community was located generally highway 40 to the north and Highway 52 to the south, 500 West on the east and 800 West on the west. The German Lutherans who came into the area emphasized education so that their children could be literate learn the Lutheran religion along with the German traditions and language. Public school was not built in New Palestine until 1884. At first the church Pastor served also as a teacher. In the 1860's a Mr. Lahusen was employed as a teacher. In those days it was custom for the teacher to "Board Around" living with the members a week at a time. One day he asked Pastor Kunz if he would be able to substitute for him. The Pastor willingly agreed. A few days later Mr. Lahusen disappeared as did the money he borrowed from the congregation members. Pastor Kunz took over the teaching responsibilities at this point or until 1879.

In 1880 the Richman history of Hancock County tells , "To the German Lutherans, the house that had been dedicated to the worship of God is a sacred place. For this reason they will permit no meetings to be held in the church except regular services and business meetings for the administration of the affairs of the church. A little story in the Hancock Democrat tells," At the German Lutheran Church under the superintendency of Rev. J.C. Kunz, the Christmas tree and the appropriate declamations and the Christmas songs and the extra large amount of presents on the occasion, was surely the greatest affair ever exhibited in Hancock County. This congregation is the most numerous in membership and wealth, and the members are very liberal in their donations for church and school purposes and have celebrated Christmas in the greatest manner imaginable, which would have credited to a metropolitan city as it is much credit to the church and its worthy minister and will bear imitation..."

Zion is has been restoring their old cemetery were the first Pastor is buried. If have family down the Zion way you might consider lending your assistance.

Enough. I have told you everything that i know and some things I don't. Talk to me.C/O Daily Reporter of jksvarenina@hotmail.com

2017-06-16

Cleveland and Charlottesville Methodist Churches

By Joe Skvarenina

What do you know about the Charlottesville and the Cleveland Methodist Churches? John Rasor tells the current building of the then Charlottesville Methodist Episcopal was dedicated in 1905. An earlier church was dedicated in 1855. Twice during its history the local congregation has liquidated the congregation's building debt.

Many of the settlers of the Charlottesville area were Methodist's the first services were held in a school house one mile north of town on west bank of 6 Mile Creek on the farm known as Badger's Place. Later a small church was two miles north of town at the Six Mile Cemetery. This church was built by the whole community regardless of church affiliation. This church cost \$70 to build. it was dedicated in 1838. then it became necessary to have church in town and a school house was used on the east bank of the creek. John Foley donated lots for a new church and it was dedicated in 1855. On June 25, 1902 a storm damaged the building quite a bit. the Christian church at the north end of town was demolished at the time. Work was begun and the new building was dedicated in 1904. I do believe that is the current structure.

The Cleveland Methodist Church was 100 years old on Oct 30, 1950. In 1840 a small congregation of Methodist organized and worshiped in peoples homes until about 1850. At that time they built a small church a quarter mile north on Cleveland. . They worshiped at this site until 1870 when they moved the church down to Cleveland on the National Road. In 1942 the National Road was widened and the church was moved to the back of the lot. In 1965 the Cleveland and the Charlottesville churches combined in to one and the building at Charlottesville. It was chosen as the site of the new congregation since it was larger. The altar, side benches and the baptistery was moved from Cleveland to the new site. I am told they are still being used. I do believe that the old Cleveland Church location is west of the Hatfield Camp ground.

Enough. I have told you everything that I know and some things I don't. Talk to me. Contact me c/o jskvarenina or the Daily Reporter.

2017-06-09

By
Joe Skvarenina

I have gone out to Otterbein United Methodist Church for their soup suppers several times and had great time. The Macedonia United Brethren was first organized in 1860 in a school house. The school was eventually purchased and used as a worship site until 1870's. Interesting enough there is no historical records of the names of the actual charter members. In 1882 five trustees for the

Buck Creek Township United Brethren Church were elected at the Warrington Circuit. Those elected included John Parker, Calvin Crump, George W. Parker, John H. Apple and Wills Parker. In 1882 a building was built at a cost of \$832.58 and the building was paid for by the day of dedication. At this point the church became Otterbein. Current church records go back to 1900. A new church was built on the site in 1911. In 1968 United Brethren merged with the Methodists. The current church historian is Carolyn Swinford and she keeps a good history. By the way, all churches need functioning historians. If your church has a local history I would enjoy seeing a copy!

Also thank Ninestar for providing this column. Ninestarr and other groups like it started during the Great Depression as the Rural Electrification Association under Franklin Roosevelt to provide power to the farm communities. It is a fine organization that does much for the community. Enough. I have told you everything that I know and some things I don't. Talk to me. C/O Jskvarenina@hotmail.com or Daily Reporter.

2017-06-02

By
Joe Skvarenina

Jim Webb called wants to know if any one remembers when racing on the track on a midget track stopped in Greenfield when someone was killed in a accident. The midget racing was on the south side of Route 40 in the area of the old gas station close to the Brandywine. According to Jim they would also flood the track and have boat races with flat bottom boats. Carnivals would set up in the area when they would come to town, also. This is probably the empty filed by Riley Park Tire.

Ron Myers says there is an old dirt track is still there back in some trees around 300 south. Lisa Caudell says that Dewey Leary owned the track. Mike Burrow indicated that Dewey and Margaret Leary once owned the 40 acres on which the track was located. According to Burrows Dewey," had a small dirt track. The track didn't have anything paved and as such, it is now just a field surrounded on all sides by the woods...the track was shut down when fellow was killed during the race out of fear of liability... a fellow named Cobb Wayne was killed is a wreck on a third turn in September 1947...some tell the story that the guy was decapitated." According to Burrows neither the newspaper stories or the death certificate didn't indicate that Mr. Wayne shall we say lost his head? Maybe it is an urban legend.

Everett Kyser said he was 11 years old when all this happened. According to his brother in law he and the two boys climbed a tree to view the race when a helmet rolled in front of them with the head still in it. You decide.

Don Myers called and he said his dad was the flagman at the dirt track. His nickname was "Black Flag." He tells motorcycles might have raced at the track after auto racing stopped. He tells that the Midget Racing was run by Everett Leary and Ivan Dudley was the ticket manager. So the 'Midgetdrome' was different than the old dirt race track on South 9. They would also race on the old McCordsville Dog track by auto dealership on Route 234 as part of a circuit

Write c/o the Daily Reporter or jaskvarenina@hotmail.com.

Enough. I have told you every thing that I know and some things I don't. Talk to me.

2017-05-26

By
Joe Skvarenina

John Neargardner is still looking for photos and the location of the Warrington Race track and writes I was able to find an advertisement for a race at Warrington date July 25, 1895. The ad mentioned the times of and the purses to be awarded but no directions to the track.

I went to the Courthouse and looked at the l transfer records and drew a blank. The only thing that I could find was William Garriott sold 40 acres but it didn't say to who.

Holly Trees Miller writes, "My father Everett Trees Sr. lived in Warrington all his life

and he said...The race track sat on our ground just to

the west of the Nashville Road. For many years you could tell where the track laid and the bank of the curves . Now that it is not real visible but I know the location. We still use the

Race Track well for water...I have heard about the track all my life and would have loved to have seen it in the day when folks came for miles around for a "fair" and horse races. Uncle Lewis Trees owned the ground and sold it Elmer and Laura Keller Trees and they felt racing was not "above board" so after a year or so they sold the track. The Grandstand was blown down in a violent thunder storm on June 25, 1902 along with other buildings at the track being damaged. A revolver was found in one of the horse stalls. It made then wonder what type of folks hung around the horse track. Charlie Trees owned race horses and had a son of the "Great Dan Patch." Ruth Trees Cole writes that the track was on her Grandfather Elmer's' farm. She was Russell Trees daughter. There were three Tree's brothers, Russell, Forest and Everett."

Write c/o Daily Reporter or Jskvarenina@hotmail.com. Enough I have told you some things that I know and some things I don't. Talk to me

2017-05-19

By Joe Skvarenina

Ronn Berry writes, " I moved to the local area from the Richmond area about several. ago and have enjoyed reading your articles since being here. Before moving to this area I had been putting together the history of auto race tracks in east central Indiana. Not including the Hancock Co. area although I have come across some info on the 5 tracks (maybe 6 ?)

I know that there was a track in Charlottesville at one time. But I don't know if it was an auto or horse track. Do any of you? I also know that there was track on 300 South off of State Rd Nine. It was a smooth dirt stock car track and the racing was stopped after some one was killed at the site. The remnants of the track still exist in the woods. By side of Riley Park Tire in the empty field they used to flood the field for boat racing and later for midget car racing. There also was a horse racetrack in Warrington. It was called the Driving Track Association and attracted many large crowds. It was acclaimed to be the best one half mile track in the area. Can any fill in any of the rest. I know that the Hancock Boys and Girls Club used to sponsor midget racing in Riley Park.

Write C/O Daily Reporter or jaskvarenina@hotmail.com.

Enough. I have told you all that I know and some things I don't. Talk to me.

2017-05-12

By Joe Skvarenina

Jake Gumberts provides us with more information on Race Tracks in Hancock County. According to Gumberts race track exited east of Stanley Chevrolet on State Route 67 in McCordsville. A Soccer Field was been built on the site. The drive into the entrance of the Soccer Field was the driveway onto the race track. There is an old light pole in this area that has been there for years. Jake adds , " the track was called the dog track and I don't know why? In the late 1940's after WW II my dad use to take me there to watch midgets racing. As I remember it was a short flat asphalt tack. Two drivers I recall were Harry McQuinn and Len Duncan. For years it was grown up in weeds and people jumped trash on it. This should not be confused with the dirt bike track that was along 67. This was built in the later 1970's and close to the old Plantation Club." Do any of you remember the dog track?

Also don't forget t the horse racing track in Shirley called Alfalfa Downs. Also the track in Warrington was the home of the Driving Park Association Race Track and people came from miles around to enjoy the racing. It was supposedly the best 1/2 mile track in the area for horse racing. This was about 1894-95 and there was a amphitheater constructed and five or six races were held at the track each summer. It was was built southwest of Knightstown Pendleton Road and directly west of Warrington.

Wrote c/o Daily Reporter or jksvarenina@hotmail.com

Enough. I have told you all that I know and some things I don't. Talk to me

2017-05-05

By
Joe Skvarenina

Periodically we have had inquiries about the McCordsville Dog Track. Ronn Berry comes to our rescue, He says. " The track was built in the late 1930's for dog racing but the owners were never able to get a gambling permit because some say of mob connections. It never opened for that reason." Later midget racing became a big deal and it was bought by Armscamp Speedway. One of the owners was named Scampleton and the track was called Raceland. It was asphalt. It cost 85 cents for general admission and 60 cents for the grandstand. The McCordsville Sport Park was eventually built on the location. As late as 1966 you could still see outlines on the track on satellite photos. There was a drive-in theater built on the site after the track closed in 1949. There also was a speedway in Fortville called the Outlaw Speedway off of 36 and 67. It was torn down in 1986. It was a dirt track. There was also a track for midgets next to Riley park.

Myron Fohr in a Marche family car raced midget on this track in the 1940's . Mr. Fohr was a big time

midget racer from Wisconsin. The Marche family from Milwaukee were big players in auto racing in the 1940's and promoted many racers at the Wisconsin State Fair.

Write c/o Daily Reporter or jaskvarenina@hotmail.com

Enough. I have told you everything that I know and somethings I don't. Talk to me.

30

2017-04-21

By
Joe Skvarenina

Patti-Waitman-Ingebretsen writes, "I am coming to Hancock County in a few weeks and planning on visiting the Harlan Cemetery to locate my 3 great grandfather, Joseph Clark, grave-site. I contacted the sexton to see the location and if the grave is marked." Patti goes on to tell us that Joseph Clark was born in 1813 and died in Hancock County in 1843. There is a Joseph Clark buried in Section D according to Sue Baker's cemetery book with an 1843 date. I don't know if the grave is marked. I am wondering if it is an infant burial?

Harlan Cemetery is at the intersection of 1000 East and 900 North Roads in Brown Township. Stephen Harlan gave five acres of his farm land for use as a burying ground in 1834. It started with the grave of Vincent Cooper's child who wandered from home and was found frozen to death on the banks of Sugar Creek. The Concord Baptist Church was organized and in 1855 the congregation replaced their log structure with a frame building which still stands. Today it is known as Harlan Church. The property is maintained by an endowment. It is on a corner and can be accessed from either road. There is an entrance brick archway with bold letters saying "Harlan".

Brad Arthur from Bradford Builders has his offices on State Street across from the hospital. Is a brick home with some interesting arch and other detail on the inside. It was probably built circa 1929 like some of the other homes on North State. He is attempting to determine who built that home? Do you know?

Write c/o Daily Reporter or J.Skvarenina@hotmail.com.

Enough. I have told you everything that I know and some things I don't. Talk to me.

2017-04-14

By Joseph Skvarenina

Janet Casey writes, "I have been reading recently about the Orphan trains during the 1920's. . I have heard that some these trains came though Greenfield. It seems that many were immigrant children whose parents had passed after coming to this country. Do you have any information regarding these trains? I wondered if some of the children found homes here. Most of the stories I have read were fiction." I can't go much beyond what you already know. Yes I have heard rumors that they did stop in Greenfield and that some of the children did stay here. That what I know and I hope that some people will speak up? The Orphan Train Movement was between 1854-1929. During that time 250,000 homeless children were moved from New York to the west. Indiana had the most children placed here. The Orphan Train was started by the Children's Aid Fund under Charles Brice. Hopefully the children who came west were able to escape from a life of suffering. Some say that the Orphan train was the start of the modern foster care movement. Some children ended up adopted and the older children were paid for the work accomplished. All these children were provided with room and board. The records say 120,000 children were placed in Indiana. Who can add more?

Tom Freeman wants to set the record straight. He tells that the Christian Chevrolet was in the area of the current Community Corrections Building and the Kroger's store would have been at the location of the old Andre's Florist. Also the that Weber's Chrysler would have been in there parking lot in front of the old Linde's Cleaners and Solotkins Furniture Store would have been in front of the new jail.

Bob Wortman is justifiable proud of his mother Velma who comes from a long line of teachers. The Morristown Library is named after her. Mrs. Wortman began teaching in Gary in 1929 and also taught in Morristown. Her daughter Janet would have been the fourth generation in the family who taught. Velma's mother Venice Curry started teaching in Blue River Township in Hancock County at Pleasant View School.. As a teacher she carried the water from neighboring farms, served as the janitor, taught all the subjects and became leader in her school community. For a sixth month term she received \$2.00 per day. She tells that some of the farm boys were bigger than she was.

Write c/o of the Daily Reporter or jskvarenina @hotmail.com.

Enough. I have told you everything that I know and some things I don't. Talk to me.

2017-04-07

By
Joe Skvarenina

Greg Murphy writes, "I have been working on researching my mother's Slifer genealogy line and found an old obituary for my maternal 2nd gr. grandfather's, (Washington O. Slifer) brother, Jacob A Slifer 1853-1921.

Jacob and wife Selma J. (Osborn) Slifer left Greenfield and moved to Denver, Colorado.

It appears Jacob was friends with James Whitcomb Riley and his obituary mentions one of Riley's poems which gives a fairly sound description of the actual location of the Ol Swimmin Hole.

'The bridge of the railroad now crosses the spot.
Whar the old divin' log lays sunk and forgot...'

What's your take on the location."

Ok, Greg now we are getting into the deep weeds. I don't think anyone knows the actual site of the 'ol swimmin hole'. According to some it was placed in Riley Park at the current site by Gilbert Winslow, City Engineer, because no one knew the exact location. A large stone identifies that site. Also some say it is on the north side of the National Road. Others say it is further north along the Brandywine near Roberts Lake. At one time there was a spur rail line which ran through Riley Park which answer the railroad bridge question on the north side of the National Road.

Write me c/o of the Daily Reporter or jskvarenina@hotmail.com.

Enough. I have told you all I know and some things I don't. Talk to me.

2017-03-31

By Joseph Skvarenina

Ken Lyons writes, "I enjoy your "Back in Time" articles in the Hancock County Daily Reporter. My dad worked at a dairy in Greenfield back in the 1970's to early 1980 -81. The dairy was called Best Ever. I believe they were headquartered out of Anderson. My dad is now 74 years old and I think he would really enjoy an article on the dairy if you need ideas for future stories." I have had some difficulty finding information on Best Ever Dairy In Greenfield. Do any of you have any information? I know that you can find Greenfield Dairy milk bottles on occasion. The historical record shows that there was a Creamery in town as a result of the gas boom which was from about 1887 to 1915. Also ice cream was sold from a building on South Pennsylvania Street around 1958 by the Jacobs family and it was called the Greenfield Ice Cream Company. The building was across the street from Newcomers Lumber Company old building and at one time Late Night and Mad Dog Pizza was at the site. What do you know?

Do you remember Bill Sizemore long time water and sewer department superintendent for the city of Greenfield. He retired March 23, 1992. He had been in the water business for about 35 years. He started at the Greenfield plant on April 15, 1972. He became superintendent of the Greenfield Water Plant January 15, 1975. Prior he had been employed at the Huntington Indiana Plant. He was active in the American Association of Water Works. His retirement party was held on March 21 at the Greenfield Elks Club. Bill was a dedicated public servant and 80 people attended his farewell. He retired to Florida.

I had the opportunity to talk to good old Joe Settles and wife Carol the other day. Joe and his wife met at Crider's Drive Inn. Joe is from the Philadelphia area and can tell you many stories. He remembers Philadelphia circa 1945-47 when there was 3 filling stations (Shorty Hines was one), 2 hotels, 2 barber shops, a pool hall, 2 grocery stores, and a grain elevator which sold chickens and eggs. He also recalls when the old school house on the hill was used as a playhouse. He also tells that he rode into town on the roof of the bus when he was a kid. Settles served as the Jackson Township Trustee when the Charolttesville Fire Station was built. He had also served as Treasurer and Auditor of Hancock County with distinction.

Write me c/o the Daily Reporter or jskvarenina@hotmail.com.

Enough. I have told you everything that I know and soem things I don't. Talk to me.

2017-03-24

By
Joe Skvarenina

Jeff Gildea writes, "Can you tell me what the old building is at the intersection of 200 S and Morristown Pike? Was it a school or church?"

It is an old one room school house with a belfry. In 1959 the state of Indiana required through the Indiana School Reorganization Act that school districts have one thousand students which essentially marked the end of the one room school house and the beginning of the mega districts we know today. A county committee drew up the new boundaries. The eastern district included Brown Blue River and Jackson Townships. Greenfield Central took in Center and Green Townships. Southern School Corporation consisted of Sugar Creek and Brandywine Townships and Mt Vernon District took in Buckcreek and Vernon Townships.

It is interesting to note that Hancock County voted against free public schools in 1848 and 1849. But voted for the 1851 Constitution which had a clause for free public education so that ended the discussion. In 1915 there were 30 one room school houses in Hancock County. Blue River Township was the only one to consolidate schools prior to 1959. In 1956 a merger between Hancock Central and Greenfield City Schools was voted down. East Greenfield was the last operating one room public school house in the county closing circa 1947. It was called the Ada New School School. On Sunday March 26 at 3 the Hancock County Historical Society at the Chapel in the Park will have David Heller long time Mt. Vernon Educator speak on Hancock County History be sure to go.

Write me c/c of the Daily Reporter on jskvarenina@hotmail.com.

Enough I have told you everything that I know and some things I don't. Talk to me.

2017-03-17

Kim Keiser writes, "I had some good genealogy breakthroughs in the last week and thought I should pass on some links to you in case they might be helpful.

Here is my genealogy tip of the day: photos. I am not sure if you have ever tried to find any ancestor pictures online but they do exist if you really dig for them. I have used eBay and <http://www.ancestorville.com/> and had some luck. If it is a common name try searching in quotes to narrow down the search, like "John Smith." Ancestorville is particularly good since she gets pretty detailed. Another trick is to do a search by using just a last name, or a town or city and state name to see what comes up.

This is a master list of early 19th & 20th century photographers: <http://www.langdonroad.com/>

If you are looking for any plat maps this is a good site: <http://www.historicalmapworks.com/> or also try ebay or the Indiana State site: <http://www.in.gov/library/2533.htm>

My two last tips of the day are free live streaming from the Roots Tech 2017 conference Feb 8 - 11 on the <http://www.rootstech.org/> website: <https://www.rootstech.org/live-stream-schedule> and also using the Civil War tax revenue stamp as a way to date photos. It was used from August 1, 1864 - August 1, 1866 as a way to make money for the war and just recently came across one of these stamps on the back of a CDV photo, which helped to narrow down the time period. " Thanks Kim will provide this to all genealogists out there. It looks like good tips to me.

Some other thoughts, in the 1890's funeral notices also called morning cards were often used. Undertakers could produce them in a day. They can be found in family collections and also at flea market and can provide usefully information. Sue Bakers book on Hancock County Cemeteries and church records also helps locate family members. I do believe that the Pioneer Cemetery Commission sells Baker's book. Write me at the Daily Reporter or jskvarenina@hotmail.com

Enough I have told you everything that I know and some things I don't. Talk to me.

2017-03-09

By
Joe Skvarenina

Danielle Hall writes, " I have lived in our country for over thirty years. Recently I have been studying Indiana's county courthouses. I was wondering what is Hancock county courthouse history. Who did the sculpture work on it and etc. I have tried to find things at the library and online and I have hit roadblocks. Just want to know more about it." In 1996 several of us wrote a centennial history of the Courthouse. it should be in the history room at the Hancock Public Library. The present courthouse is the fourth and was completed in 1898. The cornerstone was laid in 1896. The building is built of Bedford limestone from Ellettsville. The architects were Wing and Mahurin of Fort Wayne. It was built by the firm of Geake and Henry. I do believe that the architecture is Renaissance Romanesque. There is a mural of James Whitcomb Riley with children on the third floor. There are also four murals painted at the head of the marble stairwell. These murals depict important battles in American history. The artist is unknown. The final cost of the building including furniture was \$242,600. In 1918 the school children from all over the country raised funds for the erection of the Riley statue out front. It was sculptured by Myra Richards from Indianapolis. In the old days there was a pond in the front of the court house for watering your horses.

As a comparison the first courthouse was erected in 1829 at a cost of \$200. The second courthouse was begun in 1831 was a two story brick building built at a cost of \$3000. The third courthouse was built in 1856 at a cost of \$14,400. During the Civil War several ball were held in the court room but this practice was discontinued when public sentiment was stirred up over the holding parties in the court rooms. The bell from the third courthouse is in the bell tower of the Presbyterian Church in Greenfield. Danielle I hopes this helps.

Contact me c/o of the Daily Reporter or at jksvarenina@hotmail.com. Enough I have told you everything that I know and some things I don't.

2017-02-24

By
Joe Skvarenina

Jim Arthur writes, "I often wondered where John Delany acquired the funds to purchase the land in Hancock County in 1833 and recently I found that he purchased land in Franklin County, Indiana in 1819. He probably sold this to acquire for better land in Hancock...

He purchased the SW 1/4 of Section 14, T 12 N R 13 E from the government on July 13, 1819. The patent was signed by President James Monroe and says "that John Delany, {a man of color} of Kentucky deposited in the General Land-Office full payment for the land.

In 1820 there were 65 African American residents in Franklin County and in 1830 there were 91..." Does anyone know anything about John Delany?

Jim Arthur and wife Phyllis live in the Delany Inn in New Palestine.

According to the Richman history of Hancock County, "John Delany operated a tavern along the Brookville State Road (US 52) many years before the Civil War on the site of the William Nichols homestead (Nichols was Phyllis Arthur's great great-grandfather). Henry Lantz also lived at the site.

John Delany and Jonathan Evans also opened and operated a small grocery along the Brookville Road in 1831, 1833 and 1838 respectively. But the site is not known. It is difficult to find information about Mr. Delany and other African Americans in Hancock county but there are more who lived here than the written history does tell. A recent study by the Indiana Historical Society indicates there were some mixed marriages in Sugar Creek township around the Delany's time. What do you know? Write me at jskvarenina@hotmail.com or c/o the Daily Reporter.

Enough. I have told you everything that I know and some things I don't. Talk to me.

2017-02-17

The Beech

By

Joe Skvarenina

I have written about the Beech Church in the past. But I continue to get more information about it. The Beech Church also known as Mt. Pleasant is located in Rush County, Ripley Township. The other day Pastor Markus Dennis from Walnut Ridge Friends Church and I wondered over to take a look. Once a year the African Methodist Episcopal Church has a meeting at the site. In 1828 free black families from North Carolina settled in the area and began to purchase land from the United States Government at \$1.25 an acre. The community grew very rapidly in the 1830's and 1840's. On June 16, 1832 a resolution was adopted by a vote of church members to choose the African Methodist Church (A.M.E) as their denomination. On October 2, 1840 the Indiana Annual Conference of the A.M.E Church was organized at the site.

Stephen A. Vincent at speaker the 2016 Beech Homecoming tells that there is much about the Beech Settlement worth noting.. "Most of the people who signed the founding document ...were people of mixed racial backgrounds from an area along the eastern North Carolina Virginia border." Their ancestors included mixed mulattoes descendants of English servant women and African slaves, Indians from the various tribes plus a scattering of Anglo Americans who married these mulattoes and Indians. The Beech community also served an important role for free people of color trying to escape from the south prior to the Civil War. White mistrust of these people reached a new high because of several slave conspiracies in the 1820's. Their rights were reduced and they became closer to slaves, themselves. This caused several families to seek new homes in the western frontier. First they went to Ohio in the early 1820's and then to Beech Settlement in the late 1820's. By the 20th century the community dwindled. The last member of the Beech Settlement Sanford Hill died in 1955. The Beech Homecoming has been happening since 1904 around Labor Day.

Write C/O the Daily Reporter of jskvarenina@hotmail.com.

Enough I have told you everything that I know and some things I don't. Talk to me.

2017-02-10

Walnut Ridge

By

Joe Skvarenina

My dad used to make me gather black walnuts when I was a kid. To this day I shutter when I see a walnut tree. Walnut Ridge Friends Church In Ripley Township in Rush County is named for those black walnut trees on and around the property. To get to the church go east on the old National Road till you reach Charlottesville at the sign go south toward Carthage. As you cross into Rush County you are in Ripley Township and very close to the church. At one time this township had one of the highest concentration of the Society of Friends or Quakers in the United States. The Friends migrated to this area or free state from North Carolina , Virgins and Tennessee because of their opposition to slavery. The first Walnut Ridge log meeting house was built in 1826 to serve their needs and the church has stood on the site ever since. In 1840 a frame structure replaced the log building. On April 12, 1864 that frame building was set a blaze by the Knights of the Golden Circle commonly called the KKK. It seems that Walnut Ridge was a station on the underground railroad for slaves on their journey to Canada and freedom.

The Walnut Ridge Friends responded to this vandalism three days later and plans were made to build the current brick structure. It was completed in July 1866 at a cost of \$1071 63. The outside the building stands, with the exception of a large vestibule in the front, and it was finished after the Civil War. Rev. Markus Dennis is the current Pastor of the congregation. His father also served the meeting. The Underground Railroad hiding place was the church basement. if you are interested the worship starts at 10 am on Sunday.

You can write me c/o of the Daily Reporter or email jskvarenina@hotmail.com. Enough. I have told you every thing that I know and some things I don't. Talk to me

2017-02-03

Riley's First Love!

By

Joe Skvarenina

Friend and fellow historian John Rasor likes to identify the sites of old buildings and businesses in Greenfield, a sort of above ground archaeology, see if you agree with some of his findings. The current Donut Shop on Main was once Criders Drive Inn, do all you oldsters remember cruising Criders?; Nash Metro Dealer was located at Franklin Rd and Rte 40 at the Pool Sales; Sun Glo Gas was located on McKenzie and State Rte 9 on the northwest corner; Simmons and Corey's on Rte 40 were one time gas stations; Angus Inn was at the current location of Mueller's Auto Body; Pizza King on West 40 was once Standard Foods; Pizza King Parking Lot was Andis Motors; Christian Chevrolet was at the site of Community Corrections; McGullers Meat Market was at McKenzie and State Rte 9, southwest corner and Riley Park Tire was once an Interurban Barn and the tracks are still in the building.

In my collection of books the other day I found a copy of "Clara Louise: An Idyll" written by Mrs. George Cooper. Have you every seen one ? Clara Louis Bottesford was Riley's first sweet heart. Miss Bottesford boarded in the home of Reuben Riley and son James fell in love with her. It is said that Clara had long dark hair and limpid brown eyes. Later Clara lived with the Leachman's in Tailholt which accounts for the poems James wrote the family with a Tailhot theme. James and Clara never married. The reason according to Clara's sister, "The poet propensity for following Bobby Burns in his best known characteristic grew stronger-and finally brought and end to the love story." The "propensity" (liquid refreshment) did not stop either Burns (the Scottish poet) or Riley from writing the best of dialect poetry. The book was published in 1938 and is probably worth \$50 to \$90.00. If you find one buy it. You can write me c/o the Daily Reporter or email jskvarenina@hotmail.com. I have told you everything that I know and some things I don't. Talk to me.

2017-01-27

Purdue and Butler U in Greenfield!

By

Joe Skvarenina

Did you know that Purdue University almost was built in Greenfield?

James L. Mason was the Hancock County Representative to the State Senate at the time when Purdue was founded. a number of counties wanted the school at their location. Thinking himself as a man on influence, Mr. Mason offered legislation for the school be located in Hancock County. In 1867 Mr. Mason introduced a bill to give Hancock County the nod and also indicating that the County Commissioners were willing to donate \$100,000 of the county's money for this project. The decision went undecided for two years. In 1869 the County Commissioners went to work and offered to give the original one hundred thousand dollars in cash in June 1869 or three installments; one in June of 1870 of \$41,666; the second in June 1871 of \$41,666; one in June of 1872 of \$41,666. The commissioners at the time were William New and James Tyner.

But Mr. Purdue of Lafayette won site location when he offered one hundred and fifty thousand dollars of his own money in addition to the sum offered by Hancock county with the stipulation that the college be called Purdue Agricultural College at Battleground. The Hancock Democrat newspaper complained , "This is the most magnificent offer, but why should the Legislature favor the rich against the poor."

To all my Purdue friends, you almost got there!

Later it was rumored that Northwest Christian University founded in 1855 renamed Butler University in 1877 was going to move out of Irvington because of space limitations. Some thought it should be move to the Hancock fairgrounds or the hospital property. Spearheading this effort to get Butler University to relocate to Greenfield was John f. Mitchell Jr. magazine feature writer and play write and eventually editor of the Hancock County Democrat. Mitchel was educated at Butler along with at the time Greenfield students Beulah Meek Garriott, Bess New, Tom Black, Mary Bragg Hughes, Gerald Woods, and Dick Strickland. Butler University was an easy interurban ride from Greenfield.

But it was not to be,the site chosen for Butler in 1928-1929 was the Fairview area of Indianapolis. John Mitchell Jr. was on the Board of Directors of Butler from 1935-1963.

Contact me at jskvarenina@hotmail.com or write c/o the Daily Reporter. Enough. I have told you everything that I know and some things I don't. Talk to me.

2017-01-20

Hancock County Hoopsters

By

Joe Skvarenina

Do you like to watch basketball? I do, especially IU and Purdue. As a typical Hoosier, I would like to be known as a rabid basketball fan. Basketball players in the early days did not have the same luxurious settings as today's teams. In 1918 one of the many early games in Greenfield were played in Hinchman's Hall, the second story of the Hinchman Grocery Store and Wagon Works. This building is now the Butler Soup Kitchen. There were big posts in the hall which the players learned to avoid and play around. The posts are still upstairs with a basketball floor and concession stand.

The first Greenfield High School Basketball team made its appearance in 1915. This first game played was against Mount Comfort Buccaneers. The location of the gym was a large building on North State which had been a tabernacle used by Christian Churches for revivals. Later the school board purchased it for a gym. The site probably the current location of the gun shop. At that time Greenfield team was known as the Greenfield Tigers. The Greenfield Tigers and Mt. Comfort Buccaneers which had just been a team for just three sessions prior locked in battle on the court. Mt. Comfort turned away the Tigers. The Greenfield team entered the district tournament with only six players that season and lost to Hartford 42-5. Hartford was the eventual winner of this tournament. Greenfield players included Hilligoss, Morton, Rhodarmer, Willman and Manon. This was the first team.

In 1910 Greenfield High School also had a football team. It tried for State Championship but was defeated by Brownsburg 32-0. Later in the season Greenfield trounced New Castle 44-0. In 1911 Greenfield High School had it's first baseball team.

Write me c/o the Daily Reporter or jksvarenina@hotmail.com

Enough. I have told you everything that I know and some things I don't Talk to me.

2017-01-13

By
Joe Skvarenina

The first Presidential election held in Hancock was on November 3, 1828 and 101 votes were cast with the county population being 400. Local attorney Thomas Walpole was a Presidential elector and canvassed part of the state for Taylor and Fillmore. It was because of the 1840 election campaign of Walpole vs. Chapman that the Democratic national emblem of the rooster was born here in Hancock County. In 1843 Martin Van Buren took a tour of the west after his defeat in the election. He was a democrat the the drivers of the stage were Whigs. In reaction to the fact that Van Buren vetoed funds for the National Road improvements the driver dumped the stage near the old log jail. In the presidential election of 1860 the county voted 1,202 for Lincoln and 1,289 for Douglas. An old legend has it that Lincoln stayed at the old Cleveland Inn . on July 19, 1862 the Hancock democratic convention was addressed by Thomas A Hendricks of Shelbyville. Hendricks was Samuel J. Tilden's vice president in the contested election of 1876, Tilden vs.. Rutherford B. Hayes. Hayes of Ohio won the election. Later Thomas Hendricks became Grover Cleveland's vice president. On Oct 30, 1896 former President Benjamin Harrison came to Greenfield and addressed the Grand Republican Rally.

One particular Republican rally for McKinley served 10 oxen, 1,500 chickens, and 20,000 buns. A Democrat response to the festivities in a local newspaper indicated, "The republican barbecue owing to rainy weather and the Bryan atmosphere in all parts of the state, the barbecue held in the city on Tuesdays was not a success in the point of attendance. The food was cooked in the furnace of the nail trust in the city. While hungry Republicans were eating the food produced on the farms, they ought to have turned their time and attention to those producers of wealth which the present gold standard is sucking the life blood from every farmer and making every farmer in the country poorer..."

On July 27, 1899 William Jennings Bryan spoke at the fairgrounds (the current hospital) to a crowd of 200,000 people. In 1903 Bryan made two speeches in Hancock County with one being on the east side of the courthouse and the other at Gant's opera house. I also believe that Bryan was in Fortville.

On July 20, 1926 former Governor James M. Cox , Democrat candidate against Warren G. Harding, stopped in Greenfield long enough for the "street light" to flash go. He was on the way to Indianapolis for a funeral.

In 1948 Harry Truman made a now famous whistle stop in Hancock county.

In 1960's Eugene McCarthy and Barry Goldwater jr. campaigned in Greenfield.

Ken Lyons would like an article about the Best Ever Dairy in Greenfield. I guess it was headquartered in Anderson. His dad worked there from the 1970'to the 1980's. Do you remember it? Enough. I have told you everything that I know and some things I don't . Talk to me.

2017-01-06

By Joe Skvarenina

In 2008 the road to the White House actually went through Hancock County with Bill Clinton being at the Middle School.. I know at the time that I actually got calls from folks in town wanting me to come and see him. My friend Trina said every Republican office in town holder was in attendance at Clinton's speech. Barry Goldwater and Gene McCarthy were in town during their campaigns. I guess one spoke at the car wash on west 40 which is now gone. Indiana was a player in the current election. Indiana also has also been a player in past elections. This is especially true from the Vice Presidential standpoint. I fact with Mike Pence on the ticket Indiana might be called the home of Vice Presidents.

For example, Schuyler Colfax was a South Bend resident and editor of the "St Joseph Valley Register". He was Speaker of the House of Representatives from 1863-69. He was Vice President under Ulysses S. Grant.

William English was Democrats nominee for Vice President in 1880. Prior he served four terms in Congress 1853-1861. Thomas Hendricks from Shelbyville served as 16th Governor of Indiana. In 1876 he was the running mate of Samuel J Tilden who lost to President Rutherford B. Hayes. This election was thrown in the House and as a result of a deal troops were withdrawn from the south. Charles Wilson Fairbanks was Theodore Roosevelt's Vice Presidential running mate in 1904. During that year at a party he served Manhattan cocktails at his house on North Meridian with Theodore Roosevelt in attendance. This was during a period of intense temperance in the Republican party. As a result he was removed from the 1908 General Methodist Conference and he was known as Cocktail Charlie Fairbanks. He was Roosevelt's Vice President from 1905- 1909. In 1923 his house was purchased by Indianapolis Insurance Company and still stands near the Children's Museum. John Kern was the running mate of William Jennings Bryan who campaigned in Hancock County several times. Kern was a twice unsuccessful democrat candidate for Governor. Thomas R. Marshall was Vice President under Woodrow Wilson for 1913-21. Marshall had a dry sense of humor. He was known for saying after a Senate debate for saying , " What this country needs is a good 5-cent cigar." On January 30th Dan Quayle was sworn in as the 44th Vice President of the United States Quayle was the youngest Senator elected to the Senate from Indiana.

Candy Adtkins wants to know if anyone knows if there are any Indian prayer trees around? It has been said that there is one on Arrowhead Golf Course. When she first mentioned it I had to look it up. Prayer trees are trees that are bent in certain shapes give to point to a sacred site to leave a message or give directions. Have you seen one?

Enough. I have told you everything I know and some things I don't. Talk to me.

2016-12-30

by
Joe Skvarenina

Do you know why State Rd 9. Is called the Highway of the Vice Presidents? Many of the United States Vice Presidents were from Indiana and lived in communities along the Highway. For example Thomas Hendricks was from Shelbyville. The other day I was Columbia City in Whitley County and discovered that Thomas Riley Marshall, Woodrow Wilson's Vice President ,was that community.

The Marshall Family, his father and grandfather, were democrats. His grandfather was county clerk when Andrew Jackson was organizing the party. Both his grandfather and father stood by the party during the unpopular Civil War days, even yielding their church membership in preference to the party

In Marshall's book, " A Hoosier Salad" he mentions a Methodist minister threatened to strike the Marshalls off the church rolls if they continued to vote Democratic and how his grandfather replied that he was willing to take his chance in hell but never in the Republican party. Marshall's father preferred to join his wife's church, the Presbyterian. Thomas Marshall's most famous quote was, "what this country needs is a good five cent cigar." Like another Riley we know Marshall like to frequent the local water hole. When Calvin Coolidge was elected as Vice President under Warren Harding Marshall sent him his condolences.

Donald Short writes , 'My family lived behind Dr. Larrabee...Our neighbors to the south were also Dr. Tom Larrabee and his wife Nellie. He was a Veterinarian. They were great neighbors... Dr. Larrabees and his wife Audrey lived right across from the New Palestine Bank on U.S. 52 in the big two story house now painted pink and cream colors. To the east of the big house sits a small house painted the same color...The door to this little building opened to a small waiting room which had a small window so you could talk to the receptionist...As I recalled from cleaning the office for Doc most of his meds were mainly in liquid form, displayed on shelves in big tall brown apothecary bottles...Audrey paid me 50 cents an hour, Eventually she also hired my brother Richard for 35 cents an hour. When Richard asked why she paid me more...her reply...Richard, 'Donald works harder...' When I turned 16 and got my license, I chauffeured Doctor Larrabee when he made his calls to St. Vincent's Hospital on the north side of Indianapolis...Dr Larrabee and Audrey were the most wonderful couple I have ever known. My Aunt Marie lived with them for many years as a housekeeper and they took care of her until she died. While Dr. Larrabee was in the House of Representatives' and the Senate , my Uncle Sidney Wilkins and his wife drove them back and forth and stayed with them in Washington, D.C. helping with whatever they needed done...My dad bought Dr. Larrabee's, 1941 Buick and we drove it to California to see me where I was stationed at El Toro marine Corp Base..."

Enough. I have told you everything that I know and some things I don't. Talk to me.

2016-12-23

By Joe Skvarenina

What do you know about Riley Days? How did it all begin? The honoring of a great man is common to us in this country. Minnie Bell Mitchell while attending a national meeting of the federation of clubs came up with the idea of celebrating the poet's birthday with school children. She introduced a resolution to that effect and the idea of a birthday celebration came to life in 1911. The momentum reached its pike in 1912 when Riley was honored by 2000 children at Lockerbie Street and he came to Greenfield where his car was parked at the Courthouse and passing children threw flowers. Riley was present with a silver loving cup purchased by Professor Frank Larabee and presented by Jessie Milikan's grandson George B. Walton. It was said that years 1,000,000 children from coast to coast participated in the celebration. In 1913, Anderson, Indiana State University and Cincinnati conducted Riley Days. In 1915 Columbus Indiana celebrated Riley Days. In 1915 Riley came to Greenfield and sat on his front porch with his family's sisters, brother, nephew Ed Eitel, and with his mother's cousin, William R. Hough and the Hough family as children marched by with flowers and threw the blossoms at the poet.

The poet's last birthday was celebrated Oct. 7, 1915. at an event which happened in Indianapolis. It which included an afternoon festival of Riley poetry set to music and danced in pantomime. In the evening a dinner was hosted by former Vice President Charles Wilson Fairbanks. Speakers included Governor Ralston, William Allen White, George Ade and former Senator Beverage and Senator Kern. In addition Secretary of the Interior Franklin K. Lane suggested to various school superintendents that one of Riley's poems be read in each school house. Indiana Governor George Ralston proclaimed Riley Days state wide. Later that years Riley spent the winter and spring in Miami. Riley Days was also celebrated in Miami.

After 1915 the poet's birthday was celebration with different methods of marking the passing. The 1949 , the 100th anniversary was probably the largest in modern times. Entertainment took place in front of the Courthouse and the tower of flowers becoming a local tradition. Riley days now focused around the Riley statue. In 1957 Frontier Days and sidewalk sales by merchants were held downtown. In 1959 100 children brought flowers to the statue and parade was led by the Greenfield High School band and the local fire department. This was the beginning of the children's flower parade, In time "Frontier Days" became "Sidewalk Days and then "Riley Days".

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2016-12-16

By Joe Skvarenina

I had the opportunity some time ago to participate in the dedication of the new National Road interpretive panel on the Court House Square placed by the Indiana National Road Association. *If you have the opportunity go take a look.* The National Road or Route 40 as we know it today made major contributions to Indiana, Hancock County and Greenfield. Today we know it as US Route 40 or n Greenfield Main Street. At one time the National Road was the Main Street of the Nation. It began in Cumberland Maryland and was supposed to end in St. Louis Missouri. But it never went further than Vandalia Illinois. It was the first Federal Highway. Thomas Jefferson was the first President to articulate the idea. Jefferson deemed it wise to create a national pathway to America's vast western interior.

Congress debated its benefits. Was it appropriate for National government to become involved in internal improvements?

In 1820 Congress finally allocated \$10,000 for laying out the first stretch of the road. It was surveyed in 1827.

In 1829 the first appropriation for the opening of the road in Indiana was made by Congress. It cost \$51,600. The 1827 survey map of this area shows an old state road running nearly parallel to National Road to Richmond In Hancock County we know this as the "Old Centerville Road" which would have traced the path of South Street in Greenfield or 100 South in the county.

It was constructed through Indiana in 1834-1835. Superintendents Homer Johnson and John Milroy were paid \$800 per annum to do the job. In June they advertised for proposals to cut timber for a road 28 ft. wide and to remove the stumps in the center and do the grading. There were many requirements. No stumps were to be over 15 inches high. Those in the center of the road were to be rounded and trimmed so as not to cause serious damage. The actual cost of construction was \$121 per mile. By the way Mr. Milroy is buried in the old Greenfield Cemetery.

In the early days there were substantial economic benefits to this great highway. Hotels, Inns, and Taverns sprung up and were located in Charlottesville, Cleveland and along other places on the pike. The Dayton and Indianapolis Stage brought mail and passengers along the road. It also brought along news of the recent political happenings. I took 2 1/2 days to travel from Dayton to Indianapolis

Animals, flocks of turkeys, were driven east by east to market. White settlers went west to meet our nation's manifest destiny. The 1830's and the 1840's were the hay day of the National Road and many recorded what they saw

Thomas B. Seawright tells..."As many as 24 horse carriages have been counted in a line at one time on the road...

laden with merchandise and drawn by six Conestoga wagons were visible all day long at every point and many times until late in the evening besides innumerable caravans of horses, mules and hogs..."

Benjamin Parker tells,..."a flood of emigrants poured along the great highway from June to November. These companies of wagons were those of the "movers" as we termed the families that were traveling to open farms. Many families occupied 2 or more road wagons with their household goods, and their implements. with extra horses, colts, cattle, sheep, and sometimes hogs were led or driven behind...while even the resolute family, the members of which carried their worldly possessions upon their back or pushed them forward in hand wagon was not an unfamiliar spectacle...But the greatest wonder and delight of all was the stage coach, radiant in new paint and drawn by four matched horses in their showy harness and filled inside and on top with well dressed people. I think that there has never been a more graceful or handsome turnout than one of those fine stage coaches drawn by a splendid team of matched horses, and driven by such drivers as used to handle the ribbons between Richmond and Indianapolis..."

But what left to see in Greenfield today from the National Road era?On the courthouse square at the site of the Chapman later Gooding tavern which is now Greenfield City Hall. Former President Martin Van Buren, former Vice President R.M. Johnson, Henry Clay, abolitionist John Brown and Congressman George Washington Julian were guests at the establishment. George Knox an African American barber had his shop at the site. He later went on to establish the Indiana Recorder one of the first African American Newspapers in the state

At one time, circa 1834, travelers on the National Road washed their horses in a pond, five feet at its deepest on the northwest corner of the public square.

The second courthouse on the square was used from 1834 until 1851. Later the bricks from the second court house were used to build the old Christian church at the rear portion of the former DH Goble Printing on American Legion Place. This is now a parking lot. Another unique structure was the Thomas Walpole house which was located on the National Road. It was at the rear of Miller's jewelry and burned in 1992.

The charm of the old National Road also appealed to James Whitcomb Riley and the Riley Old home is of the National Road Era. In his narrative verse the Child's World scenes are laid out facing the highway. I am sure that some of his verse was inspired by the characters he met long the road during his childhood. James Whitcomb Riley called Route 40 a road that blossoms with romance.

Enough. I have told you everything that I know and some things I don't. Talk to me.

2016-12-9

Historians know that any new discovery about the "good old days" changes how we think about the present and our expectations of the future. This is particularly true when Greenfield looks at James Whitcomb Riley.

Over the years historians have argued over the influence of one great man shaping a period of history. Nineteenth century romantic philosopher Thomas Carlyle wrote, "The history of what man accomplished in this world is at the bottom of the "Great Men" who worked here." Others believe leaders do not make history but are products of the time and a reflection of the spiritual or material forces that call forth during perilous times and evoke great leadership. James Whitcomb Riley was "great man." He was born Sunday morning October 7, 1849 to Reuben and Elizabeth Marine Riley on a shady street in the sleepy little town of Greenfield. Both parents rejoiced over the birth of their second son. According to the "Complete Of James Whitcomb Riley" published by Harper Brothers, " "...as a reader of his own poems, as teller of humorous stories as a mimic, indeed as a finished actor Riley genius was rare and beyond question." During his lifetime Riley received many recognition's. In 1902 he received an Honorary of Arts from Yale University. The Academy of Arts and Letters elected to membership in 1912 and he was awarded a Gold Medal for his poetry. On October 7, 1911 school children in New York City and Indiana conducted programs in his honor. On his birthday in 1912 Greenfield welcomed him home through a host of children scattering flowers. In 1913 Anderson, Indiana, Indiana State University and Cincinnati conducted Riley Days. In 1915 Columbus Indiana celebrated Riley Days. the poet's last birthday was October 7, 1916 in Indianapolis. In the evening a dinner was hosted by former Vice President Charles Wilson Fairbanks with many other notables. Indiana Governor George Ralston proclaimed Riley Days state wide. On July 22, 1916 Riley passed way. Today Greenfield still honors Riley and his memory.

I have told you everything that i know and some things I don't. Talk to me.

2016-12-2

By Joe Skvarenina

Bob Barnhart shares with us a September 10, 1901 copy of the Hancock Democrat Newspaper Supplement on the assassination of President William McKinley. McKinley was shot in Buffalo New York on September 6, 1901 and he died on September 14. His wife, Ida, was at his side just prior to his death and his last word were, "It is God's way. His will be done." In a letter to the editor T.J. Renforth writes, "I offer a suggestion how to punish Czolgosz (the assassin) and also how to get rid of the anarchists. I don't believe that Czolgosz is worth hanging or wasting time and money giving him a trial. I would just simply take his clothes off, tie him securely some place in the hot sun and pour molasses all over him and let the flies eat him up. To get rid of the anarchists I would select one of our newly possessed islands and take the inhabitants off gather up all the anarchists take them and put them on the island, give them plenty of dynamite and sail away as quickly as possible. In six months there won't be an anarchist to tell the tale." McKinley was succeeded by Vice President Theodore Roosevelt. McKinley and Roosevelt were responsible for the creation of America's overseas empire as a result of the Spanish American War.

When the war was declared on Spain in 1898 patriotism in Hancock County was intense. The Solomon D. Kempton Post of the Grand Army of Republic at Fortville immediately offered their service to President McKinley. The Spanish American War lasted for four months from April to August of 1898. Indiana furnished 7421 volunteers for the war. There were no battle casualties from Hancock County in the Spanish American War but 73 died from disease.

Enough I have told you everything that I know and some things I don't. Talk to me.

2016-11-25

By
Joe Skvarenina

Marcia Gray writes" In a past column you mention the Board of Charities and Corrections and the board members. You asked if anyone recognized the names of any of the board members. Matilda Marsh is my great-great grandmother and was the wife of Ephraim Marsh a well-known local lawyer and civic leader. Their only daughter Ella married William A. Hough. She was better known as Tillie."

Yes, Ephraim March and his wife were civic leaders. Ephraim, in December 1898, when the Greenfield Banking Company became a state bank he was one of the first stockholders. He was an active Mason and participated in the laying of the courthouse cornerstone in 1896. He served as Deputy Clerk of Courts under Henry Swope and was elected in his own right in 1874. He was a Director of the Greenfield Maxwell Railroad which would have been an Interurban line. He served as Chairman of the Hancock County Democrat party in 1880 and 1884. In 1888 he was on the state Democratic Party Committee. He was involved with the Cleveland Hendricks Club in Greenfield and vigorously campaigned for President Cleveland. Thomas Hendricks, Vice Presidential candidate, was from Shelbyville. He opposed William Jennings Bryan's Free Silver policies which he claimed would caused hyper inflation. He was on the Board of Incorporation for the Indiana Normal School in Greenfield. He help found the Temple Social Club. Being an attorney, he assisted in the establishment of a law library in the court house. He and his wife were also members of the local Chautauqua and Scientific Club. In 1897 he participate in on the founding of the Greenfield Public Library in the high school which is now the Superintendent 's office.. He and his wife were on the committee to select books for the library. The telephone came to Greenfield homes on February 1, 1899 and he and Matilda had one of the first telephone lines.

Enough. I have told you all that I know and some things I don't. Talk to me.

2016-11-18

By
Joe Skvarenina

Did you see Hancock county is going to put some budget funds in the upkeep of the Memorial Building. Before the building was constructed there was a poultry business on the site. Back in the day, Hancock County wanted to honor the young men who had fought in WW I. The county government believed a building with meeting rooms and gym would be an asset and should be dedicated to those who served in during the last conflict. Bonds were sold to finance the construction of the Memorial Building. There were to be meeting rooms for various clubs and organizations including farm groups. The second floor was to be handed over to American Legion #119 and was used for their headquarters until 1951. The cornerstone for the Memorial Building was laid by men who fought in the Civil War, Spanish American War and WW I.

An architect's sketch of the "Proposed Hancock County Memorial Building was published in March, 1923. Trustees were J.W Trittipo, Fortville; Robert F. Reeves , J Ward Fletcher, George W. Moorehead and William A. Hough of Greenfield. When the building was completed the "War Mothers of Hancock County" placed a plaque inside the Memorial Building to honor soldiers who had died in WW I in the front entrance hall. Also a remembrance of President Wilson was placed on the wall. These two plaques are still on site. Go and see them. Many local high schools held basketball games in the gym at the Memorial Building. until local districts could build better athletic facilities. In the basement of the Memorial building many dinners and social activities were also held. In 1938 500 people attended the first model airplane show held in Hancock County at the Memorial Building. Both gas and rubber band models were displayed at the show.

Enough. I have told everything that I know and some things I don't. Talk to me.

2016-11-11

By
Joe Skvarenina

Happy Veterans day to all. Thanks for your service. This photo is of Col. Edwin P. Thayer house. The location was the corner of Main and Pennsylvania Streets on the lot immediately west of the Ricks Theater. The site currently houses an abandon gas station. Thayer died in 1943 and he had served as the secretary of the United States Senate under Presidents Harding and Coolidge. Edwin was the son of Hollis and Permelia Thayer early residents of Greenfield. Mother Permelia and several ladies made a large American flag at this house for troops going away to the Civil War. Son Edwin lived most of his life in Hancock county. He later married Minnie Ridpath daughter of the distinguished historian John Ripath, head of the history department at DePauw University, from which Col. Thayer graduated. According to his obituary many of the country's most influential people were his friends. Through Charles Dawes, an Ambassador to the Court of St. James, Thayer was able to arrange for the presentation at the court the daughter of a prominent businessman. Edwin Thayer had been Sergeant of Arms at four national Republican conventions. He received the rank of Colonel for his services during the Spanish American War. Do you when he house was torn down?

The citizens of Hancock County have a long tradition of military tradition to the nation. I invite you to visit the Vietnam and American Revolution Bicentennial Parks south of town. Two revolutionary war veterans are buried at the site. William Hatton, a private in Col. William Washington's 3rd. Regiment of Calvary. He died in Hancock County on August 27, 1842. Also Mosby Childers who served in the 7th Virginia Regiment under Capt. Matthew Dewitt also died in Hancock County. His original grave in Brown Township has never been found.

Enough. I have told you everything that I know and some things I don't. Talk to me.



2016-11-04

By
Joe Skvarenina

Did you know that Greenfield had a Jewish community in the late 19th and early 20th century and beyond. The Koin, Solotkins and Smulyans families were leaders of commerce in town. Simon Koin owned the Star mercantile on the corner of East and Main Street which has since been torn down. It sold yard goods of all types. Simon Solotkin owned a furniture store on east Main Street. On the south side of Solotkin's store was a junk yard from which they bought and sold metal and other valuable items. The yard is still there today. Simon Solotkin was active in business around 1917. He was from Russia and he went back to the old country to visit his mother. At first he sold second hand furniture but later he sold newer items. Now the Solotkins and the Smulyans family were related. In the 1920's Solotkins built a new house on the corner of Spring and North Street which would be the current Pasco residence. Minnie Solotkin's new good glass and used some from the junk yard for the windows in the house. The Smulyans had an egg, butter, and poultry business on the south side of Greenfield. They left the community in 1971 for Indianapolis. Since there was no Jewish temple in town several of these families participated with the Christian Church.

Jeff Smulyans owns WIBC and Sandra Bornes and her husband Robert developed Union Station. Bornes' maiden name was Solotkin. You Hancock County fund raisers should be aware of the connection.

Enough. I have told you every thing that I know and some things I don't. Talk to me.

2016-10-28

by
Joe Skvarenina

William Trail, a former slave, was an early settler of Shirley. Mr. Trail and Jesse Johnson owned a farm on the west side of town. Before the Panhandle Railroad was built through Knightstown in 1853 he took loads of wheat to Cincinnati. It took him 5 to 7 days to make the journey. He great granddaughters , Artemia and Chotile taught school in Washington D.C. They were both born on the farm. Chotile received her graduate education from Columbia University. She was well known educator.

Now here is the rest of the story.

William Trail in 1814 fled from James Blakley's Plantation in South Carolina to Indiana Territory. Hired slave catcher James Cleveland pursued Trail into Connersville Indiana where he resided as a free man. Cleveland had entered into an agreement with Trail's former owner Blakely to catch Trail after an earlier agreement to emancipate had not been fulfilled. Eventually Trail entered into another agreement with his owner to purchase his own freedom for the sum of \$300. He paid the debt and a " Deed of Emancipation" was filed with the County Recorder. William Cunningham was engaged to collect the \$300 but never turned over to funds over to Trail's owner. But since the Deed of Emancipation had been filed the question of Trail's freedom had been settled and subsequent attempts were stopped. Trail then purchased twenty five acres in the Connersville area and became an active member of the community. In 1832 William Trail sued Rev, James Smith for slander and won a \$25 judgment. Trail was accused of burning down Smith's barn. After winning the judgment Trail sold his farm and moved to Henry County. Trail was committed to freedom and his own dignity. Four of Trail's son's served in the Union Army during the Civil War. Two of his brothers died in the conflict. His youngest son Benjamin died at the Battle of Crater. The family established a school in Trails Grove near Shirley. After the Civil War William Jr. became a prosperous farmer and developed Trails Grove community. He is probably the one known as the founder of Shirley. There is a Trail Grove Cemetery on the Henry County side of Shirley. I would imagine it is an African American site.

Thank you to Georgia Cravey who shared her information on William Trail with me. The Winter Issue 2013 of Traces will tell you more. Also look at Volume 1817-1826 Blackford Reports.

Enough. I have told you everything that I know and some things I don't. Talk to me.

2016-10-21

Calvin Fletcher
by
Joe Skvarenina

The Diary of Calvin Fletcher extends from 1817 to 1866 and the Indiana Historical Society has reprinted this very fine primary historical source and it is worth examination by serious reseachers. Fletcher was a central Indiana lawyer, farmer and banker. He read law in Urbana, Ohio and Indianapolis and was admitted to the bar in both states. He practiced law in Indianapolis and for twenty years he traveled twice a year the fifth judicial circuit which included Hancock County and ten other Indiana counties. Fletcher was antislavery and advocated colonization. He was a temperance proponent. In 1865 he was the highest income tax payer in Marion County. Over the years his journeys took him down the National Road. In 1827 he wrote, "that National Road has been permanently located west to the state line.' In 1835 he tells, " Take the National Road as roads have not been much traveled are very rough. We proceed to Knightstown 60 houses National Road not yet constructed but workman at it. Raysville nearby with four houses." In 1838 Fletcher reports," grading going on mcadamizing the National Road." In 1848 he tells, "Germans 11 miles east and south of the National Road have commenced the process of draining and will ultimately dry of tilling." This was probably the Jacob Schramm family in the New Palestine area. In 1850 Fletcher, wrote, " went to Cumberland and dined with Colonel Robinson and Theodore Johnson both engaged in the construction of the plank road between her and Greenfield ...and one toll booth.

Using primary sources can be very useful and rewarding when looking into the past. The first hand viewpoint can be very useful to the historian when you are attempting to construct the story.

2016-10-14

by
Joe Skvarenina

Have you ever heard Le Blazer Studio Club? The founder was Lee Blazer. He was born in 1896 in Alert Indiana. He received his training at the Columbia College of Speech and Drama. He came to Greenfield in 1932 gave music lessons and eventually he became the Director of Music at the Christian Church. His Greenfield Christian Church Choirs gave vocal concerts on the Courthouse steps on Friday nights in the 1930's. Later he started his studio club with the goal of bringing artists to Greenfield to round out his piano and voice students cultural growth. He called these guest appearances Matinee Musicals. His Studio Club performed "Messiah" at Bradley Methodist Church along with those visiting artists. Later his Studio Club toured at the Murat Temple, Starlight Musicals and Cincinnati. The Studio Club was located at 610 North East Street in Greenfield where Mr. Blazer taught piano and voice lessons in a room with a big picture window.

Blazer made Greenfield the scene of some very special events. The people he brought to town were of the greatest artistic accomplishment of the time. Pianists such as Menahem Pressler, Belia Doszormeny Nage, Sidney Foster, Anna Kaskas and other musicians such as the Berkshire Quartet and the duo of Margaret White on the harp and Harry Houdeshel on the flute plus others were brought to the community. Mr. Blazer made Greenfield the scene of some of the greatest cultural events of the century. Because of Lee Blazer Greenfield students came to know Brahms, Mozart, Bach, Rachmaninoff, Rimsky-Korsakoff and others. So what of all this activity, children of the mid century also received life long discipline. According to some, note would be written on the music like "Mother help. This boy needs practice."

The Le Blazer Studio Club which began in 1938 closed in 1963. Blazer died in 1981.

2016-10-07

by
Joe Skvarenina

Do you remember the old Riley School. It burned down April 30, 1985. The arch at the front of the Greenfield Central School offices is all that remains of the Riley School. It was at West North and Pennsylvania Streets, the Romanesque Revival structure was built in 1895 as Greenfield High School. Constructed out of rough-cut blocks of stone, the structure was ponderous with massive towers and arcade entry porch. The school served the community as the first library and an elementary school before it burned. Around 1925 a bid from a Greensburg firm indicated the cost of a proposed new Greenfield High School would not be less than \$117,854. The building was placed on the same location of the West Building or Washington School. At the close of basketball season in 1926, the Greenfield Holding Company was formed to promote the erection of an adequate gymnasium for the high school and the community. This building was also known as Lincoln Park which was an elementary school and today I do believe it is the Lincoln Square apartments.

In 1905 Greenfield had five schools. High School was held for a brief period of time at the Old West Building. Lincoln and Longfellow had four teachers and Washington had six. The high school had 17 instructors. East Greenfield was a one room school house.

By the way, the Old Lincoln School was located on the corner of Pennsylvania and Pierson Streets. it was opened in 1890 at a cost of \$5,946 and was close in 1934. Later when the Boys Club was formed, it was used as a clubhouse. It was remodeled and reopened as a school in 1948. It was closed again May 29, 1969. Today there are apartments at the site and I have been told that some of the bricks were used in the construction of the apartments.

On August 23, 1843, Cornell Meek entered into a contract to construct a county seminary building. It was uncertain when the first school was taught. But the second term began September 24, 1848. This building would have been located in front of the old Ranch Market probably in the middle of Pennsylvania Street. There is a marker at the site.

Enough. I have told you everything that I know and some things I don't. Talk to me.

2016-09-30

By
Joe Skvarenina

Thanks to Ninestar for sponsoring this column and the cable program "Step back In Time". I really appreciate their support of local history. Please tell them you appreciate it too.

Do you know the origin of the name "Park Chapel Christian Church". Dave Woods founded the congregation about thirty years ago in the the Chapel in the Park or the Hancock Historical Society Museum in Riley Park. The Chapel in the Park originated as the Philadelphia Methodist Church in 1835. This was before there was a town of Philadelphia which was the first town platted in Sugar Creek Township. Early meeting of the congregation were held in the log school house,, a frame school house on the north side of the National Road and Willett's Tavern on the south side of the National Road. The current building was built in 1856 and it was about 20 rods south of where the new church built in 1980 now stands in Philadelphia. In 1906 the building was moved again to place a basement under it. J.J. Coldclazier was the minister at the time the current building was erected. In 1980 it was moved to Riley Park by the Historical Society and the work of many including old Tom Williams

In the 1870's and 1880's Philadelphia was an important railroad town. There was a saw mill grist mill, grain elevator, black smith and brick school house. The school building is still there on the north side of the road. In May of 1871 the Philadelphia Cemetery also known as the Hawkins Cemetery was surveyed and given to the church. A price of a lot was \$6.00. It was maintained by the church until 1908 when it was incorporated separately.

During the depression the church like others suffered too. In 1931 there were 41 in attendance. The offering was \$1.26. The minister was paid \$8.00 per month. Happy anniversary to Park Chapel. Enough. I have told you everything that I know and some things I don't. Talk to me.

2016-09-23

By
Joe Skvarenina

Here is a photo of the old Why Not Theater now Patriot Insurance provided to me by Joan Fitzwater the Greenfield City Planner. If you go look at the building now you see the white lines at the top which trace the old roof line of the building.

The building was built in 1919. The admission for going to a show was 25 cents except on Saturday when previews of upcoming programs and other serials were shown for 10 cents. A piano player provided exciting music for all the programs.

In some cases the accompanist was local musician Earl K. Smith who wrote "Down by the Old Mill Stream." On the other side of the square was the Riley Theater of course named after the James Whitcomb Riley. George Foreman was the operator probably the projectionist. It was sold in 1919 by Ira Stephens to Maude Gates and her daughter Agnes. The building is currently McCleery's Sporting Goods. I have been told that the projection room still exists upstairs in the building. Also note how the building tappers to the back like a theater.

It was at the "Why Not" that the movie the "Old Swimmin Hole" starring Charles Ray was first shown. This feature film shown many of the places in Greenfield like the Riley Home and the Old Brandywine. In 1921 Mayor Ora Myers declared March 7 and 8 Riley days and the schools dismissed early for the students to go see the show. City students saw it for free on Monday and county students for free on Tuesday.

In the early 1930's going to the show became a regular event in town. Mr. Howard Ellis manager announced that the thirty five cent admission would now be twenty five cents on Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday. Balcony seats would be fifteen cents. Over the years the names of the Theaters in Greenfield changed. The one on the east side of the Court house became the State Theater. Both were used by local service club to treat young people to free Christmas parties. In 1946 Walter Weil built the Village Theater which is today's Ricks Theater.

Enough. I have told you everything that I know and some things I don't. Talk to me.

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2016-09-16

By
Joe Skvarenina

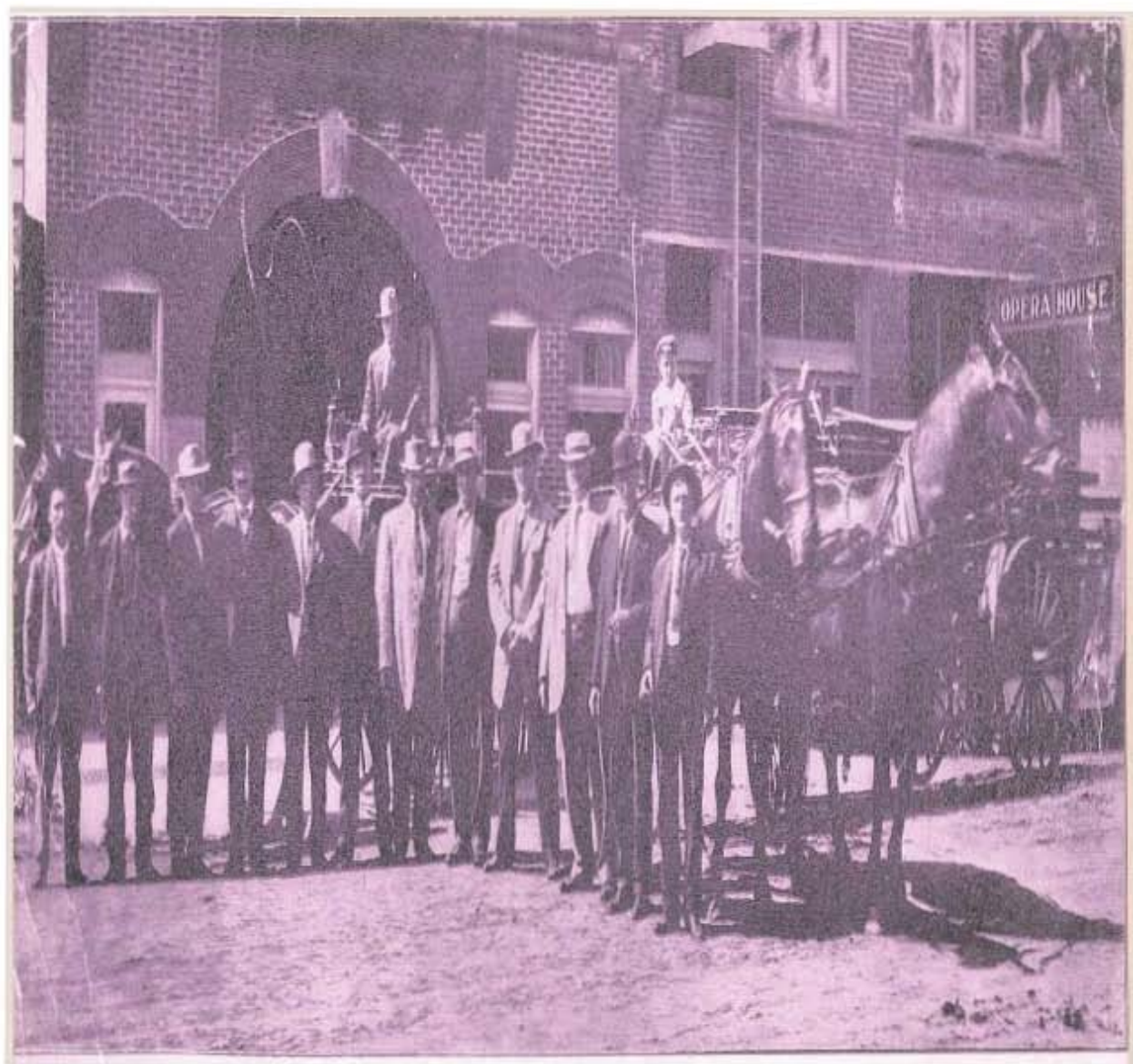
Greg Roland shares with us this photo of Gant's Opera House. I have never seen a picture of these site before. Unfortunately the horses block the view. The location is currently the Wooden Bear and in the past had been Holt Motors. Some call it the Grants but Gant is the proper name of the Opera House. Charlie Gant owned the Opera House and the Gant's Pool Hall on Main Street but I think it was probably on the south side of the street. But I don't know for sure. Charlie Gant and Earl K. Smith wrote and published some of the favorite barber shop ballads of the turn of the century under Gant Smith publishers. Earl K. Smith wrote "Down by the" Old Mill Stream". On June 23, 1903 Democrat presidential candidate William Jennings Bryan made his "Cross of Gold" speech at Gant's Opera House and on the east side of the Court House. On October 3, 1906 again running for President Bryan spoke in Fortville and came by automobile to Greenfield which caused much excitement. In 1904 he was defeated by William McKinley by 600,000 votes. In 1908 he was defeated by William Howard Taft. He had also ran for President in 1900 and came to Greenfield in 1900

Later in his life Bryan was the state's attorney in the Scopes Monkey Trail which of course was about the teaching of evolution. John T Scopes was a biology teacher in Dayton Tennessee. Tennessee law did not allow for teaching anything contrary to the Bible. National attention was drawn to the Court House in Dayton Tennessee because of Bryan's following and there was a national frenzy. Bryan didn't care about evolution and he only wanted uphold the Bible. The attorney for the defense was the famous Clarence Darrow. Scopes was founded guilty and was fined \$100. In 1927 the Tennessee appellate court reversed the decision attempting to restore Scopes career. While still in Dayton and five days after the trial Bryan died. A mini series has been made about the event.

Bryan was a populist and was known as the "Great Commoner" In addition to being the perennial presidential candidate he served as Secretary of State under Woodrow Wilson. But resigned in protest when the United States entered WW I.

No one was ever received in Hancock County with greater celebration when he came the first time in 1900. He was pulled into to town down Main Street in a carriage with a team of white horses. A cannon on the Court House lawn saluted his arrival. He spoke to a group 20,000 people at the Fairgrounds which would have been the current hospital property. He was truly the "Great Commoner."

One thing that is curious to me is that I read that Gant's was a tall brick building which it isn't now? Enough. I have told you everything that I know and some things I don't. Talk to me.



2016-09-02

By

Joe Skvarenina

Over the years I have attempted to identify the African American community in Hancock County . Some say it is not possible, no real definable group ever existed but I do believe that I have discovered a new way to look at it. There really was such a community but it was hidden. The Indiana Historical Society tells us that only two of the nine Hancock County township didn't have any black population between 1840 and 1870. The numbers were few in the other townships with the most being in Sugar Creek Township. In 1840 the Sugar Creek township there is a population of 16 African Americans. In 1850, there were 41 and in 1850 48 people. In 1870 there was a decline to 11. Center Township had 9 black residents, in 1850 17 in 1860 and 31 in 1870. There was one small African American settlement in Sugar Creek Township with no name. Mr. John Delaney seemed to be the center of that community. The histories say Delaney was an early grocer and tavern owner and maybe farmer. The Delaney house is currently owned by Jim and Phyllis Arthur. The Delaney cemetery is new door and probably the only African American Cemetery in Hancock County. This settlement seemed to have an interesting racial composition with white men marrying mulatto wives raising large families. For example according to the Indiana Historical Society Francis Malison, a white farmer married Jane Malson, a mulatto woman and raised a family of 5 children. Other interracial families in the area had surnames of Butler, Chavis/Chevis,Custor,Griffin, Locklear,Roberts and Washington. Also John Cambridge married Matilda Malson lived in Sugar Creek Township and had several children. In the 1850 census the entire family was listed a mulatto. Their son Edwin later served in the 2nd regiment, Indiana Calvary, a white unit instead of a unit of the colored troops. There is a Cambridge burial in the Delaney cemetery.

So,yes there was an African American community in Sugar Creek township.

Mail Bag; Kendra Smith writes,"You probably know that 100 years ago, Indiana Daughters of the American Revolution observed our state's centennial by initiating a competition to design a state flag. The winning design, by Paul Hadley of Mooresville, was adopted by the Indiana General Assembly in 1917, and in 1955 was designated as the official state flag, still known and loved today.

We're asking Indiana residents to "*Be a part of state history,*" and submit compositions honoring our flag, reflecting Hoosier spirit, and voicing abiding affection for Indiana. The contest is endorsed by the Governor's Bicentennial Commission as an *Official Legacy Project*. *For more information go to:www.Salute Indiana.org."* *This would be a great assignment for you writer out there. Please share them with me too. The winning essay will be submitted to the General Assembly.*

Enough. I have told you everything that I know and some things I don't. Talk to me.

2016-08-26

By
Joe Skvarenina

I like to go to the Library and in fact I do a lot of writing at the site. Library we have today in Greenfield is the fourth. One of the early founders of the Library was Vernie Baldwin. The first Greenfield Library, today the Hancock Public Library, was located in the old high school. The only the only thing left of the building in the arch which forms the front of the school administration building. The old high school was destroyed by a fire in the 1980's.

In 1879 Greenfield students began going door to door for spare books because the high school needed a library. When the building was built on North and Pennsylvania Streets in 1895 a room was dedicated for a library on the first floor. This would have been Greenfield first public library. The high school eventually needed the room for class, So Vernie Baldwin who had been promoted from Assistant to Librarian worked with the the school board of Samuel D. Offutt, George H Cooper, and J.W. Harrell to obtain a new building. George Cooper wife owned at lot which she donated as a site. Vernie corresponded with Andrew Carnegie who helped many communities build libraries and he donated \$10,000 to build a library in Greenfield. The Library moved into the Carnegie Building in Oct, 1909. The school board ran the library until 1917 when it became the Greenfield Center Township Library. Vernie served as Librarian for sixty years. When she retired Vern was given a small retirement dinner at the Copper Kettle in Morristown. Remark were made by former Mayor Arthur Downing and library attorney Stephen Free. Many leading citizens were in attendance.

Vernie and her three sisters lived at 210 West North Street. In the 1930's they were know as the "brain trust" of Greenfield. Vernie had every woman in town belonging to a literary circle. Sister Margaret became the first woman administrator of a school within the county's history. Sister Nellie served in WWI Red Cross in Paris and on the front lines. When she returned home she taught Latin to Greenfield students.

Eventually a \$1.4 million dollar building on North Street Broadway would replace the Carnegie structure as a library. In addition the old Carnegie's would become Carnegie's restaurant. The current library is the fourth.

Mailbag

Ralph Bussell 95 years young tells us he doesn't remember the old Grand Hotel now the Riley Emporium. He does remember the New Building which was across the street and burned down. Do you remember the New Hotel?

Wendell Davis wants to know about the history of his farm 1466 N 600 E Jackson Townships. Wesley Williams came to Hancock County 1837 settling in Jackson Township, probably the Davis farm. He built a log cabin when he arrived in 1853 a brick house. Son Thomas was in 18 battle of the Civil War including Gettysburg and Spottsylvania where he was wounded. The family donated the lumber for the building of the first and second Brown's Chapel Churches. Wesley Davis was one of the organizers of the Holiness Campground at Cleveland. Wesley

owned five sawmills in the county. he was a president of the old settlers association and as a lay leader in the Methodist Church would have the annual meetings on the property. What else do you know?

Steve McCleerey is looking for some old photos of his old buildings at 22-28 South State Street. At one time it was and old movie theater and I have never been able to locate any photos. Do you have any?

Ton Graham want to know if anyone know the history of the house at 404 N. State Street. It is a grand old structure and he would like to have some history.

Does any won have photos of the Old Riley Hotel which is now the Riley Emporium?

Tom Freeman tells that the Acorn Tree across from Bradley Methodist was at one time Leary's Gas and Oil company and it was built in 1949. Also the Pizza King was the the Standard Grocery store.

Enough. I have told you everything that I know and some things I don't. Talk to me.

2016-07-29

By
Joe Skvarenina

Don Lindsay tell us about retired State Police Sgt. Ernie Alder who lives in Hancock County. In reviewing the facts i do believe that Ernie needs-to be recognized. He is considered to be the "father" of the Indiana State Police Youth Services. In 1969 he made the proposal to the Indiana District Kiwanis Club that got the project rolling. The Kiwanis would cosponsor s summer camp that would appeal to high school boys interested in pursuing a law enforcement career. The Kiwanis would be provide financial support and the the Indiana State Police would provide troopers the Indiana State Police/Kiwanis International Camp was held in the summer of 1970 at the Hoosier 4-H Leadership Center near Purdue University. In 1973 Ernie was instrumental in the career camp opportunities begin expanded to include young ladies n 1979 the Indiana District of Optimists teamed up with the Indiana Sate Police to cosponsor "Respect for Law Camp" for fifth and sixth graders which eventually became Lions Law Camp.Sgt Alder raised funds for the establishment of the Indiana State Police Museum getting the Indiana State Police Alliance to contribute \$100,000 to the project. Good job, Ernie!

Glenna Shelby informs us that in the 2006 Daily Reporter Time Machine column tells, "seventy five years ago...Among the Civil War veterans still living in Hancock County were Louis Richmond, Martin Mailey, ed Hart, Frank Hayes, Frank Sanford, William Powers, Samuel Shelby, Scott Watts, Joseph Lamer , James M. Elliot, Taylor Morford, according to the American Legion." The year would have been 1931.

I had the opportunity to have lunch with Bob Wortman the other day. I do believe that Bob is the unofficial Mayor of Morristown. Bob was born in Blue River Township in Hancock County and attended the Westland School. In addition to his businesses of J.R. Wortman's started by his father in 1945, Fountaintown Gas and Southeast Natural Gas Bob is a community spirited philanthropist in Hancock County with the Wortman Cancer Center at the Hancock Regional Hospital. The Morritown Library is named after his mother Velma who is 105 years old and still lives alone. Velma was a school teacher in Morristown for years. Wortman has fond memories of Westland which include the post office, general store, telephone exchange, the huckster wagon and Tubby Toms weather forecasting abilities.

Did you know that Faith United Methodist Church on Swope Street was once a United Brethren Church?

Tom Allison tells us that the old railroad watch tower that was on South Pennsylvania Street in Greenfield. Do you remember it? It was probably 20 to 25 fit off the ground. In about 1974 or 1975 it was move to French Lick and serves at the museum. You can see from the photo what it looks like today.

Bud Goodyear from Wasilla Alaska is riting a book on his life in Hancock County around his childhood home at 5337 N 25 W in Greenfield. Does anyone have any photographs circa 1950 and later?

Bev Estell reminds about the Brown Township history book 1830-1976. Do you have one? She reminds us that in 1882 there was a horse track in the township. In fact Warrington's claim to fame in later years was the Driving Park Association Race Track. Crowds from miles around came to witness the racing of famous horses on a tack. It claimed to be the best half mile track in the area. There was an amphitheater and grandstands at the track. Much of the site was destroyed in a 1902 storm. Warrington was in its hay-day during this time period.

Enough. I have told you everything that I know and some things I don't.

2016-07-22

By
Joe Skvarenina

Have you ever been to the Riley Emporium? It is a wonderful place to visit the past. Do you know at one time it was the old Grand Hotel. The building is circa 1890's and I believe the style of Italianate. It was probably built during the gas boom period of free gas in Greenfield. The only news article I find about the site was that in 1917 Miss May Roberts was robbed of \$40.00 while she slept. The back of the building on Whiskey alley was probably Walter McCole's Tailor Shop. I also know that there was also a restaurant at the hotel. There is a painted landscape at that location right in the wall in the eatery section.. What do you know about the Grand Hotel. Do you have any old photos?

There is an empty lot on the southwest corner of Pennsylvania and 40, this was the site of the Knights of Pythias Building which burned several years ago. It was built 1875 and the style of architecture was Jacobean Revival. Beside the empty lot is the small Acorn Tree Shop circa 20th Century. What do you know about the Acorn building and what has proceeded it? I know that it is located in the historic district.

An effort is being made to place a statute of Riley statue on a bench in front of the home. The reading with Riley Statue will be a permanent of a double commemoration of the Bicentennial and also the Centennial of Riley's death. Noted artist, Bill Wolfe, was been commissioned to do the statute. Wolfe is famous for his other works like: Larry Bird, Abraham Lincoln, and Col. Weir Cook. It will be unveiled in October and they still need some funds to complete the project. If you are interested call 317-462-8539.

During May I had the opportunity to attend the Memorial Day service for Peace Officers at the F.O.P. There is a monument at the Lodge commemorating: Malcolm Grass. Karl Kelley, Dannie Garrison and Will Phillips. Go and see it.

Enough. I have told you everything that i know and some things i don't. Talk to me.

2016-07-15

By
Joe Skvarenina

Summer always brings back memories of the fair. Bob Adams writes, "As the county fair season will soon be starting it brings back a memory that I have and has stayed with me for many years. My career as an auctioneer spanned a period of over 50 years and took me into several states where I collected a lot of good memories. But none has stuck with me anymore than the memory of a little girl, crying her eyes out, at the Hancock County 4H livestock sale, as I sold her lamb. I sold the Hancock County 4H livestock sale for many years and on one memorable night, a little girl, heart broken, brought her lamb into the sale ring to sell, crying her heart out. I was lost for words. I don't know if I said anything. My heart went out to her. Having been in 4H myself, I knew how tough it was to be separated from an animal that I had spent the summer with. The next day, on the front page of the Reporter, was a picture of her reaching through the openings on the side of the stock trailer that was going to take away all of the lambs to be slaughtered. She was trying to pet her lamb one last time. That was maybe 10 to 15 years ago. I have always wondered what happened to that little girl who would most likely be in her twenties by now. If she reads this or if anyone knows of her I would love to share that memory with her of that night many years ago. My email is : bobadams @[mcclink.com](mailto:bobadams@mcclink.com).

Are you out there, let us all know.

The first agricultural association in Hancock County was organized in the Courthouse on June 21, 1835. Little else is know about it. In 1856 another was organized for the purpose of holding fairs. The first county fair was organized in 1856 for the purpose of conducting county fairs. In 1856 the first county fair was organized east of town on the north side of the National Road. Probably around the current site. A new fair grounds was chosen December 21 1885. The location was Boyd's Grove the current hospital site. When constructing the hospital workers would tell about finding the foundations of the cow barns.

Enough. I have told you everything that I know and some things I don't. Talk to me.

2016-07-08

By
Joe Skvarenina

Do you like to look at old newspapers? I do and yesterday's news is tomorrow's history. A June 7, 1973 edition of the Daily Reporter tells us that on date date the Home Newspaper Enterprise took over the publication of the paper from the Spencer family. The papers founder Newton Ramsey started the Daily Reporter on April 26, 1908 and his family published it until Home Newspaper bought it out. At the time of the sale the published were Mrs. Dale Spencer Miner and Mrs. Phyllis Spencer Berndt. Included in the sale was the Greenfield Republican which was in the estate of of Mrs. Dorothea B. Spencer who had recently passed away. Also in this edition was the story of the last KKK rally which happened on June 3, 1973 in a field at CR700N and CR300E. Grand Dragon William Chaney called the meeting to order. Less than 50 people showed up and there was no cross burning because of the rain. According to the speaker the Klan was limited to all native born white Christians. I earlier days 20,000 from all over east central Indiana would come to Klan rallies in Greenfield.

Hancock County has two round barns. One in McCordsville and the other in the Mt. Comfort area. An architect, Benton Steele from Pendleton promoted the round barn concept in a 1903 brochure entitled the, "Ideal Circular Barn". The photo inside of the pamphlet was the Littlejohn Barn (Kingen Barn) in Hancock Count. It was promoted as Indiana's largest round barn. Frank L. Littlejohn (1868-1935) who owned the McCordsville structure helped Isaac McNamee and Horace Duncan patent the roof design. As a partner he collected royalties from farmers for the right to build a round barn. The 1905 patent "Self-supporting Conical Roof" was an improvement over the circular barn design. By the way Horace Duncan (1877-1928) was known as the "Round Barn Man" from Knightstown.

Enough. I have told everything that I know and some things I don't. Talk to me.

2016-07-01

By Joe Skvarenina

Indiana landmarks has recently placed the Beech Church near Carthage on 10 most endangered list. This is a significant historical structure and should be saved. J.P. Hall from the Eastern Office of Indiana Landmarks tells "we is working with the decedents of the Mt. Pleasant Community who maintain and care for the site. We have funded, in conjunction with philanthropist Stan Cox – through the Central Indiana Community Foundation - to do a feasibility study and to assist with getting the property listed in the National Register. A 501c3 organization is currently. We are also going to to assist with fundraising and planning. Decedents still meet every August – which they have for over a hundred years, to hold a service at the site. The Church is the remaining structure associated with the Mt. Pleasant community, an African American community that was established near Carthage. Many of the African Americans followed the Quakers north from North Carolina as Carthage and surrounds had a strong Quaker presence. "

The church was established between 1828-1832,, The current building was built in 1865. It is Greek Revival style. Church members soon after the founding started a lending library at the structure. You could pledge 12 1/2 to 25 cents to buy books. This was during the period when less than a quarter of the adult population was literate. Many descendants of Beech Church members became prominent in education, medicine, politics and the African Methodist Episcopal (AME) Church. So the congregation had its impact.

Holly Trees Miller also tells me that there is one building left in old Nashville in Brown Township. A log cabin was discovered encased in another structure. It is east of the creek on 1000N . She send us photos. Thanks Holly. Do any of know of other old log cabins in the county?

If you would like to assist the Beech contact Indiana Landmarks, Please some photos from Landmarks of the building. Enough I have told you everything that know and some things I don't. Talk to me.

2016-06-24

John Burdeau writes," We have a name listed for Hancock Co. It is Francis M. Hanes, Corporal, Co. B, 8th Ind. Vol. Inf. 1843 to 05/??/1937. Died at age 94. Member of the George H. Thomas GAR Post No. 17. Buried in the New Palestine Cemetery, New Palestine. Does anybody know of a Civil War Veteran buried after that date.?"

Laurie Miller want to know if anyone knows of Jordans or Springers from Hancock County in 1847.

I had a great time the other day talking to Fred Bixler and Assistant Chief D.B. Bowman of the Jackson/Blue River Township Volunteer Fire Department. The community should fell proud of their efforts in the area. The group started in 1957 after a state law mandated the Township Trustee to provide fire protection with the current station being built 1977. Prior to the station the site was the location of the state highway garage. On the average the Jackson/Blue River Fire Department does 175 runs a year. There are 25 volunteers on the force. Before the current ststion was built the Fire Station was at the Lions Club Building.

Fred Bixler provides the this photo and information written by Kenneth Butler, long time Greenfield Fire Chief. Bixler tells about the photo."It shows several of the members of thr Jackson/Blue River Fire Department which was taken in front of the Charlottesville Fire Station which was at the time was located in the Lions Club Community Building at 10165 E. CR.25 North. Butler writes the 1946 Ford Howe Pumper in the photo was originally purchase new by the Greenfield Greenfield Community Fire Truck Company which was organized in 1932 as a association of members living in a 6 to 8 mile radius outside the City of Greenfield. Since this was a rural area it was called the 'Framers Fire Truck'. Each member of the association paid a membership fee of \$25.00 and only the paying members of the association were provided with fire protection. The truck was housed at the Greenfield Fire Station on West North Street and the driver of the truck was provided by the city.

Sometime around 1960 the truck was so ordered removed from the Greenfield Fire Station by Mayor Cliff Fields. Shortly there after the truck was donated to the Jackson/Blue river Townships Fire Department which had formed in Charlottesville in 1957.

Enough. I have told you everything that I know and some things I don't. Talk to me.

2016-06-17

By
Joe Skvarenina

Mary Greenan for the Hancock County Historical Society provides us with this photo of Gable Pharmacy in Greenfield circa 1890. I never heard of it before have you? Do you know the location? Harry Pierson had a drug store here in 1848. In 1880 the druggists listed included F.H. Crawford, E.B. Grose, and V.I. Early. The 1916 directory of Hancock County shows three druggist in Greenfield: Early Drug Company, W.P. Johnson, and H.H. Zike. In the 1920' Early's Drug Store was located on the corner in now the empty Christian Church parking lot. It was also the location of the old Sears Building. I know that everyone remembers Thomas Drug Store

But in doing this research I discovered there was a Gambles Hardware beside of the Gooding Tavern lot on the west side of the building which was torn down when the bank was built. The Hardware was there in the 1940's and 1950's or maybe earlier. Is it a possibility that this is Gamble Hardware and not Gable 's Drug Store. I would be interested in you thoughts?

I have a very nice conversation the other day with Tom Freeman from Superior Mowers. Tom is 78 years young and was raised in the Blue River Township and the Westland area. He remembers walking to the Landis Westland General Store to get a coke when he was a kid. Of courses it was a warm coke since the store had no refrigeration. The store carried mainly bread, cigarettes and other essentials All that is left of the store now is the concrete steps to the road. He also tells about swimming under the bridge on old route 250 south east of 600. Freeman attended the Westland School until the fourth grade when the fire happened Jan.23, 1947. Grades 1-4 finished their school year in Westland Friends Church. Grades 9-12 went to Charlottesville and grades 5-8 to Brandywine School. The Westland School was never rebuilt. Tom recalls Nameless Creek camp as very primitive and at first he believes it was a girl scout camp. He and some other boys went into Tuby Toms Cabin on the property and says it was full of beer bottles. The cabin was never locked and you could go in it when it rained. Freeman remembers Tuby for his weather predicting ability. Toms would say if the corn shuck was sparse on a ear of corn then we were in for a tough winter. Toms would drive all over the countryside looking for animals to help detect the weather. Freeman also tells when he was in the 2nd grade at Westland School in 1945-46 twenty military planes landed on the school property. The medical man in Blue River Township in those days was Dr Masaw who had some interesting home remedies like lye and vinegar for stomach problems. Mr. Freeman is a good guy if you have a chance talk to him.

En ough. I have told you everything that I know and some things I don't. Talk to me.



2016-06-10

Michael Meztzler writes "I am transcribing a set of notes and diary entries from a civil war diary. In it is mention of sending articles for publication in the Greenfield Herald Democrat. Is there any chance this is your paper under an earlier name? If so I would be interested is researching your archives for evidence of these article.Any help you could give me would be appreciated."

Michael the Indiana Library is busy digitizing old newspapers and that I would be the best opportunity on seeing any copies. There's also a Building downtown with the name Herald at the top. The Herald stopped publishing in 1908. Twentieth century newspapers include the Hancock Democrat and the Greenfield Daily Reporter. I also find the Greenfield Globe, the Daily Star, the Greenfield Evening Star, the Greenfield Republican which stopped publishing in 1973,Hancock County Jeffersonian and others. The Daily Reporter was founded in 1908 by Newton Spencer. The operation of the Hancock Democrat goes back to 1859. Did you know that Charlottesville once had a newspaper called The News published in1890. Wilkinson had two newspapers, the Gazette started in1907 and lasted only about one year and the Herald which was established in the 1890's. This paper moved to Shirley and became the Shirley-Wilkinson News. There was also the Fortville Tribune began in 1901 and the Community Record established in 1949 and edited by Mr. and Mrs. Delbert Reason. The New Palestine Press which began in 1954 and an earlier one called the News which established in 1898 were both in New Palestine. The Fortville Library has copies of the Tribune and the New Palestine Museum has copies of the Press. The Hancock County Historical Society has copied of the Daily Reporter and I think the Shirley also has copies of those paper. The Hancock County Kaleidoscope by Dorothy June Williams is a compendium of Hancock County Democrats from1917 to 1966.

Enough. I have told you everything that I know and some things I don't talk to me.

2016-06-03

By

Joe Skvarenina

John Budreau writes, " I am a life member of the Benton County Historical Society and also a board member. I am also a member of the Indiana Sons of the Union Veterans of the Civil War (SUVCW) and a member of the Company D, 27th Indiana Volunteer Infantry Reserves. We are requesting assistance from all of the county historians and historical societies in Indiana to help the Indiana SUVCW with our Last Soldier Project. This could be a very good Bicentennial Project / Legacy Project for all of the counties who don't have a Civil War Veteran listed or to research to verify that the correct Veteran is listed. I am assisting our Junior Vice Commander, Timothy J. Beckman, with this program. I suggested to him about contacting all of the Indiana historical societies for assistance. He is requesting "any and all information about a known or suspected last Veteran. Any and all information will be greatly appreciated." The SUVCW is a fraternal organization dedicated to preserving the history and legacy of heroes who fought and worked to save the Union. Organized in 1881 and chartered by Congress in 1954, we are the legal successor to the Grand Army of the Republic (GAR). One of our primary projects is the "Last Soldier Project" which was started in 2003. The purpose of this project is to locate and appropriately mark the final resting place of the last Civil War Veteran buried (or entombed) in each county/parish and in each state of this great country. At present, there are approximately one-half of the Indiana counties that has a name listed. Tim Beckman is requesting that the county historians and historical societies research the name of the last one to be laid to rest in their county, and if they already have a name listed, to verify that the name is correct. Some names have been put in by someone other than the historical societies. For information on the SUVCW and the Project, go to our website, SUVCW Department of Indiana. All of the information is in our website. We also have a list of over 100 Indiana Civil War Veterans who were known to be alive after December 16, 1940. You can refer to this list to see if you have anyone listed and then go from there. This list was provided by the Veterans Department in 1940. Someone has added names to different counties lists only later to find another Veteran who was buried after the first one. If you have any questions Tim Beckman at timbeckman@gmail.com."

According to the Binford History of Hancock County 143 residents died during the Civil War. There were six GAR (Grand Army of the Republic) Posts In Hancock County. They included the Charlottesville Post 545 active from 1889-1898; Fortville Sol D. Kempton Post #2228 active from 1883 to 1930; Gem William E Hart Post #454 chartered 1886 no disband date; Greenfield Samuel Dunbar Post Charter in 1882-1936; New Palestine Charles A. Kirkoff Post # 534, 1888-1907 and Willow Branch Lorenzo Fort Post # 438, 1886-1893.

My guess is that the last living Civil War veteran was Samuel Newton Shelby. He was from Buck Creek and Jackson Townships. In 1928 moved into Greenfield when his home burned down. He was born on Sept. 1, 1843 and was laid to rest Feb. 2, 1936. he was the last surviving member of the Samuel H. Dunbar Post of the GAR. Anyone got a better guess?

Enough. I have told you everything that I know and some things I don't. Talk to me.

2016-05-27

By
Joe Skvarenina

Laurie Miller writes, " I will be near Hancock County on... and would like to visit. My Great Great grandparents John Wesley Springer and Harriett Jordan were married there in February 1847 and were living in Grant County by 1850. I stopped by the courthouse several years ago when I first started my search and saw the marriage license at the courthouse. I didn't know what to look for back then and I was hoping there might be other records to determine who John Wesley's parents were. I am closely related through DNA to the family of Edward Springer of Shelby/Johnson County and Springers in Rush County, but I have not found the connection to Hancock county or his parents. I know hers were Moses and Mary Jordan. What records (Land, Tax, Probate Wills etc.) might I be able to find for any Springers living in the Hancock County area at that time? John Wesley Springer was born in Indiana in 1825. Please respond to Laurie Springer Miller at millers@fidnet.com." Can anyone help Laurie? Sue Baker published a book on probate and wills and other legal records which might be helpful. there are copies in the Greenfield Public Library.

i went to the Pendleton Museum to do a Ninestar program the other day. Nancy Noel and her volunteers at the Pendleton Historical Museum have a very interesting operation. It is open in May and it is free. One exhibit photographed for me by Stuart Poe tells about Maud Ward (1903-2002) who was born in Warrington in Hancock County and educated in Pendleton. Ward pioneered the preservation of sight as a health issue in Indiana as early as 1947 by founding the Indiana Society Prevent Blindness with Indiana becoming the first of the national affiliates of Prevent Blindness America. She worked as a social worker for the Indiana Department of Welfare from 1933 to 1972. Prior to 1933 as a student at Louisiana State University she became the first woman to be asked to sit for the CPA exam but declined to do so to return to Indiana to help her family during the depression. Did any of you know about her?

A couple of folks came into the Hancock County Library to visit the other day. They are going to do a driving tour of New Palestine. Do you have any sites you suggest would see on the tour? In addition Carol who owns the Riley Emporium is working on new keepsakes for the Riley Days: Post cards, plates, towels and more. You collectors please stay tuned for more.

Enough. I have told you everything that I know and some things I don't talk to me.



MAUDE WARD (1903-2002) was born in Warrington, IN, and spent her early childhood in Pendleton attending West Elementary School. She was the granddaughter of Jonathan Watson and Emily Thomas Rogers, great granddaughter of Lewis Watson Thomas and Priscilla Moore Fussell Thomas and great-great granddaughter of Jonathan Thomas and Ann Lewis Thomas who were donors of ground for Fall Creek Monthly Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends. She returned to Indiana to enter the field of social work and to continue her education at Indiana University. She returned to Pendleton in 1957.

Maude Anna Rogers Ward pioneered Indiana into being one of only two states that promoted the preservation of sight as a key healthcare issue as early as 1947. By founding the Indiana Society for the Prevention of Blindness—which became Prevent Blindness America's first affiliate three years later—Maude established herself and our state as a progressive activist for our most treasured of the five senses.

Ward maintained her position as a social worker for the Indiana Welfare Department from 1933 to 1972. Prior to 1933, Ward also had made a name for herself at Louisiana State University, where she was the first woman to be given the opportunity to take the CPA accounting exam but declined so she could come back to Indiana to take care of her family during the Depression.

2016-05-20

by
Joe Skvarenina

Lisa Oakes write" I was looking at an old map of Brown Township. There was a town north of Warrington on this map called Nashville. We currently live on Nashville Road in Warrington. Nashville Road was called Pendleton Pike on this map. I was wondering if you have any information about this or any pictures. I was actually doing a search on the old horse track/race track that used to be in Warrington when I came across the old map and found a Nashville just north of Warrington."

The town of Nashville, two miles northwest of Warrington, on the Knightstown Pendleton State Road where the road crosses Sugar Creek, was laid out by John Kennedy and Daniel Blakely of Warrington on December 30, 1834. It was named after their ancestors English hometown. The original survey consisted of 32 lots. In the early history of the town Elisha Thornburg kept a general store. In 1857 William T. Davis was granted a license to run a tavern at Nashville. The stores and the tavern disappeared before 1900. In the fact the only remaining business at the site was a blacksmith operation established by Morgan Whisler in 1882. There is now no remaining sign of the town of Nashville. The church was built after the passing of the town. I doubt if there were any pictures of Nashhville.

Paul McNeil tells us that these columns are now available online courtesy of the Hancock Public Library. Go <http://hcplibrary.org/refernce/skvareninanewspaper.pdf> or hcplibrary.org/genealogy local history>under Hancock resources>Joseph Skvarenina article collection.

I am sorry to inform Beverly Estelle that there were no guitars manufactured in Shirley. Jay Wilfong aka Dr. Fong tell, "None were manufactured there that I am aware of. Are you talking about Mr. former operation in Grant City? For a period , of time we did receive and store Telestar guitars which my company in Nashville imported." I do believe that this is probably the definitive answer.

Marcia Meredith is looking for the 1997 video of the mving of the Jane Ross Reeves Octagon House into Shirley. Do any of you have a copy. If so please let me know. Before being moved the house was located between Wilkinson and Willow Branch. In was built in 1879 at a cost between \$2200 to \$2500. Do you know Don Hammer? He and some others can tell you about the building's history. It is know owned by the Jane Ross Reeves Octagon House Foundation. The Hammers, Johnson Hiatte, Hamilton, Whites and Van Duyn families were some of the earliest Shirley settlers,

Enough. I have told you everything that I know and some things I don't. Talk to me.

2016-05-13

By
Joe Skvarenina

Marcia Gray writes" In your April 1st column you mention the Board of Charities and Corrections and the board members. You asked if anyone recognized the names of any of the board members. Matilda Marsh is my great-great grandmother and was the wife of Ephraim Marsh a well-known local lawyer and civic leader. Their only daughter Ella married William A. Hough. I've attached a photo of Matilda better known as Tillie. Thanks for your column, I always find it very interesting."

Yes,Ephraim March and his wife were civic leaders. Ephraim, in December 1898, when the Greenfield Banking Company became a state bank was one of the first stockholders. He was an active Mason and participated in the laying of the courthouse cornerstone in 1896. He served as Deputy Clerk of Courts under Henry Swope and was elected in his own right in 1874. He was a Director of the Greenfield Maxwell Railroad which would have been an Interurban line. He served as Chairman of the Hancock County Democrat party in 1880 and 1884. In 1888 he was on the state Democratic Party Committee. He was involved with the Cleveland Hendricks Club in Greenfield and vigorously campaigned for President Cleveland. Thomas Hendricks, Vice Presidential candidate, was from Shelbyville. He opposed William Jennings Bryan's Free Silver policies which he claimed would caused hyper inflation. He was on the Board of Incorporation for the Indiana Normal School in Greenfield. He help found the Temple Social Club. Being an attorney, he assisted in the establishment of a law library in the court house.He and his wife were also members of the local Chautauqua and Scientific Club. In 1897 he participate in on the founding of the Greenfield Public Library in the high school which is now the Superintendent 's office.. He and his wife were on the committee to select books for the library. The telephone came to Greenfield homes on February 1, 1899 and he and Matilda had one of the first telephone lines

Enough. I have told you everything that I know and some things I don't. Talk to me.



2016-04-29

By
Joe Skvarenina

Jacque Armstrong writes, "You mentioned in today's column that the Greenfield American Legion first met in the Knights of Pythias building in 1919. I think I've seen the building with K.P. on it and wondered what it was. I had never heard of the K of P except that my grandfather had a sword and a ring from them, so I assume he was a member. Since he died in 1964, nobody in the family seems to know anything about them. What can you tell us about the group?"

Eureka Lodge, No. 22, Knights of Pythias, was organized on the 29th of February, 1872 on the second floor of the building known as the Walker Corner which was replaced by the old Masonic Building. The Knights also met in the old Masonic Building on the corner Pennsylvania and Main Street, a room over the Capital State Bank and some other places. In 1908 the Lodge purchased three-eighths interest in a building known as the Strickland Building. In 1911 they purchased the entire building. At that time they had 324 members. Uniform rank of the Knights of Pythias was organized December 14, 1903 with Judge Hinchman as first captain. The Lodge flourished a few years and declined. In 1914 it was reorganized. At that time it had 32 members. There were also Knights of Pythias Lodges in New Palestine, Wilkinson, and Maxwell. I am sure the Lodge was similar to an Masonic Order. There were also women groups.

Do you remember Edna's Corner in Charlottesville? Edna Chestnut who ran the operation for many years recently passed away. She will be missed. She was very active in her church, Brandywine Community Church, and was a missionary to Brazil. She also worked for Addison Auction and served in the office of World Renewal. She will be missed by many.

Enough. I have told you everything that I know and some things. I don't. Talk to me.

2016-04-22

By
Joe Skvarenina

Margaret Harness would like to know" if there are any early photos of the house at 226 West Main Street in Greenfield. Or where I might find any photos of the building. It was built by Dr Noel P Howard." For our readers this is the basket and yarn shop.

But who was Dr. Noble Howard. No longer does his shingle hang outside his building n downtown Greenfield. From the time of his arrival as a young physician in 1843 until his death in 1895, his medical practice touched countless lives. Especially during the smallpox epidemic in Blue Rives Township, when fearing of transmission of the disease, D. Howard would change his contaminated clothes and leave them in a field before returning to town.

At the age of forty in 1862, Dr. Howard was commissioned as an assistant surgeon in the Twelfth Regiment of Indiana Volunteers. Ordinarily, only one doctor accompanied a regiment but the number of wounded soon led to the assignment of one surgeon and two assistant surgeons for each one thousand man regiment. Howard served the Twelfth Regiment through the siege of Vicksburg and the Atlanta Campaign. He was also involved with Sherman's March to the Sea..

Dr. Howard was a Whig and eventually a member of the new Republican party. After he returned from the Civil War he served as Deputy Collector of the Internal Revenue for Hancock County. On Sunday August 25 at 5:00 AM he died after a long siege. When he came to Hancock County it was a wilderness but he never faltered in his duty to patients. He left two sons and a daughter. He was undoubtedly one of the most energetic men in our county. His main object was to relieve the suffering of humanity. Look for photos for Margaret!

I have written more about Dr. Howard in my book "Also Great". Enough I have told you everything that I know and some things I don't. Talk to me.

2016-04-15

Rebecca Crowe from the Fortville/Vernon Township Library and Fortville Historian writes." I am working on having a sign placed where I believe an unmarked cemetery is located at the corner of Fortville Pike and 700N. I emailed Amy Lynn Johnson, State Archaeologist, Archaeology Outreach Coordinator, and Team Leader for Archaeology from the Indiana Department of Natural Resources, she forwarded my email to a Jeannie who is in charge of Department of Natural Resources Cemetery Registry. We'll see what happens. I think that placing a sign at that location will take time, man-power, and money. But, I'm willing to fight for the Denney family. They have waited so long for the cemetery's proof of existence that I won't give up. (This is Denny's corner)

There are 3 other possible unmarked graves in Vernon Twp. One is across from the old Brookside Airport in McCordsville. Another is the old Cochard Cemetery is near 200W and 600N. And, there might be an old cemetery at the bend of Merrill St. where it becomes Hwy. 238." Can anyone assist Rebecca on her quests?

Thanks to Doug Gateway, David Howell, and Paul Aldredge to for volunteering to help with railroad bridge along the proposed trail. I am sure that the students at Rose will appreciate your efforts.

Thanks for John Fleming for providing us with a Board of Charities and Corrections minutes book. It goes from December 1904 to August 1906. it seems that the state of Indiana required that counties appoint such a board of of six members to make periodic visits of the facilities. Judge Felt appointed the following six people as Board members; Christian Kirkpatrick, Martha J. Elliott, Matthew L. Paullers, James Goble. Oliver P. Eastes, and Matilda Marsh. Do you recognize any of these names? The group met in the Auditors office and was required by the State Board of Accounts to keep a minute book. I guess their major purpose was to oversee the conditions at the Poor Farm and the jail. The farm was at the location on the sheriff's shooting range and the jail would have been the 1875 one which serves as the prosecutors office. At that time the farm consisted of 216 tillable acres worth a \$1,000 per acre. The livestock at the time consisted of 20 cattle, six calves, 6 horses, and 35 swine. The garden was 14 acres and there was two new orchards. There were 19 inmates (their language) ten men and nine women. The facility housed the blind, the deaf and dumb, insane, epileptic and poor. There were no soldiers widows. The women were upstairs and the men were in the basement. There were two bathtubs and they bathed weekly. For bedding they used straw ticks. The physician who attended the farm and the jail is paid \$200 per year. The sheriff at the time was John Carlson. He had four inmates in the jail. According to the minute book the jail wasn't very clean. There were no bathtubs at the jail. In cold weather there was no bathing at all. The report reads the jail was infested with vermin. The Sheriff and the Deputy wives were the cooks at the jail.

So much for the good old days. Enough. I have told you everything that I now and some things I don't. Talk to me.

2016-04-08

By Joe Skvarenina

Margaret Kinsey writes, "When I moved to Greenfield in the early or mid 1960's, I recall that there was a section of State Road Nine in front of the hospital that was brick. No one else recalls it. What's the true story?" Margaret I do not know and maybe our readers can answer your question. Greenfield streets weren't paved until 1920 but i don't know if that means brick or asphalt. Today there are only two bricked roadways in town, Depot Street and the alley beside the wedding chapel on North Street.

George Richman was a Greenfield author and local superintendent of schools. He authored the History of Hancock County (1916) and World War I History of Hancock County (1921). In addition to being superintendent of Hancock County Schools he also served as Greenfield Postmaster and for a number of years and as a Federal and State Bank Examiner. He was a product of Hancock County Schools and Indiana Law School. He was also an attorney . He was born in Greenfield in 1875 and died in Tipton in 1961. He moved to Tipton and served as a Trust Officer for Farmers Loan and Trust Company. He was married to Alice Meek and they resided in Greenfield until 1935. An earlier history of the county was written by J.H. Binford and entitled the 'History of Hancock County Indiana from its earliest settlement by the pale face , 1818 down to 1882'. Mr. Binford was also a practicing attorney, ex county and city superintendent of schools, and late Professor of Law in the Central Indiana Normal College according to his biography.

It is probably time that Hancock County has an updated history. I know that Shirley Historical Society is working to update theirs and they are looking for information. Do you have any?

Enough. I have told you everything that I know and some things I don't. Talk to me.

2016-04-06

By
Joe Skvarenina

Rodger Wellenreiter writes, "Interesting article about the Mt. Carmel Cemetery. I live in the third house south of the cemetery on 25W. We have lived here for almost 43 years. The old Watson house was still standing when we moved here in 1973. The address you list for Budd Goodyear probably should be 5337N 25W. I think that the house he lived in is the oldest house still standing along this mile of 25W and was occupied for years by Danny Franke and his wife. Interestingly, we drove to Alaska this summer and passed through Wasilla, AK. I would like to get in contact with Budd Goodyear and see if he has any old pictures of this mile of 25W before the houses were built here." If Budd in Alaska reads this please get in contact with Rodger. We would also like to see any old photos!

I attended a County Historian Roundtable not so very long ago. In May the Indiana Historical Society is planning to open a traveling museum to be available for community festivals and other activities. It might be perfect for Riley Days or Shirley Days etc., Contact Kyle McCoy to see when you might schedule it. Also for you teachers of Indiana History the IHS also has a super curriculum guide you might download to see what new and exciting items you might introduce to your classroom. In addition you might go online www.Indidnahistory.org/historyday to sign up as a volunteer for National History Day in Indiana. You can work with students from the Fourth Grade to High School Seniors. Volunteers are needed so please consider it. Last during the Historians Roundtable we had a trivia contest. My team which included the Harrison and Clay County Historian came in third but we still won a prize. There were seven teams. Just in case you are wondering.

A tornado destroyed the Fulton County Museum Complex: round barn, log cabin, cider mill, jail and blacksmith shop. You can see the storm damage video on heir web page, www.fultoncountyhistory.org. Help if you are able to do so.

Mildred Crist, 94 years young wrote me the other day about the WW II veterans photos which were in the basement of the Memorial Building. Her husband, Simon Woodrow Grist was one of those photos. He was the first man drafted from Hancock County. He spent his Army career in Panama guarding the canal. There were many German Subs which were threats to the area. He died in 1979 and his memory is preserved in Veterans Park.

Mrs. Beverly Estell is attempting to find out if any Telestar guitars were manufactured in Shirley? Robert T. recommends we contact Jay Wilfong aka D. Fong who manufactured speakers in Grant City for a period of time. We will see what happens.

Enough. I have you everything I know and some things I don't. Talk to me.

2016-04-01

By Joe Skvarenina

I have always heard about a boulder (field stone) church in Greenfield. In the good old days anything east of the Brandywine was called Oklahoma. I have driven the area to attempt to find some sign. I was informed by one individual the foundation of the church is on the property of the 'Way Out Club' east of the building. If you go and look you can easily see some boulders from the foundation sticking out out of the round. One of the members of the Eagles Club formerly at the site attempted to dig around the foundation but found the walls would have been approximately two feet thick and it soon became an impossible task.

A 1908 Sunday edition of the Indianapolis Star tells us more about the 'most' unique church in the Richmond District of the North Indiana ME Conference currently under construction in East Greenfield. According to the Star it was to be made from boulders picked up from the area fields. Thomas Moxley, a Greenfield architect, agreed to oversee the building. Albert New gave the first \$100 and Elmer Binford an attorney donated the land. It was complete with a school in the spring of 1908. Mrs Ada New offered the construction plan for the church when she said. "The fields are full of boulders. Farmers will be glad to get rid of them and will haul them for us. If you have time go look it is interesting.

Did you ever hear of the Greenfield Club. Bill Dishman presents us with this 1940 photo. In the photo is Riley Theobald, Howard Delashmit, Elton Jessup, Paul Hawkins, Stormy Addison, and Blaine Corkiins. I know Walter Worland has one their patches framed and he was a member. But I don't know much about the club. Do you? Let me know!

Enough. I have told you everything that I know and some things I don't. Talk to me.

2016-03-25

By Joe Skvarenina

Darrel and Joyce Billings recently presented me with copy of the Home and School Visitor published in Greenfield in October 1906. The cost of the publication is 75 cents a year or 7 cents an issue. Have you ever heard or ever seen it? It was published by Goble Printing which is the now the parking lot next to the current prosecutors office. Two ads in the publication include the National Adjustable Chair company which was in Greenfield and the Central Normal College in Danville. A travel ad also attempts to sell you a train ticket to California and Seattle for \$30. The publication contains stories, songs, memory work, history lessons, poems and civics lessons.. I am sure that your children receive some sort of similar publication in grade school today. D. H. Gobble published this effort first in Jan. 1881. After 1928 he brought his sons and daughter into the publication. In the early days Lee O. Harris the Hancock County teacher, Riley friend, Civil War veteran. and poet contributed to the publication. Richard Goble told me some years back that Goble's for many years printed the Primitive Baptist Hymnal too. The Goble family house is now the law office on South Street. Dick said missionaries used to visit and sleep in family's the attic.

The publication has several sayings for students to remember. "Time is a money box. Yes and each of us coins his hours into gold, silver, copper or bogus metal, according to his taste, industry, skill or the lack of them." Or another is, "To do to others as I would, That they should do to me, Will make me honest, kind and good, As children ought to be."

Enough. I have told you everything that I know and some things. I don't. talk to me.

2016-03-18

By Joe Skvarenina

Bob Barnhart shares with us a September 10, 1901 copy of the Hancock Democrat Newspaper Supplement on the assassination of President William McKinley. McKinley was shot in Buffalo New York on September 6, 1901 and he died on September 14. His wife, Ida, was at his side just prior to his death and his last word were, "It is God's way. His will be done." In a letter to the editor T.J. Renforth writes, "I offer a suggestion how to punish Czolgosz (the assassin) and also how to get rid of the anarchists. I don't believe that Czolgosz is worth hanging or wasting time and money giving him a trial. I would just simply take his clothes off, tie him securely some place in the hot sun and pour molasses all over him and let the flies eat him up. To get rid of the anarchists I would select one of our newly possessed islands and take the inhabitants off gather up all the anarchists take them and put them on the island, give them plenty of dynamite and sail away as quickly as possible. In six months there won't be an anarchist to tell the tale." McKinley was succeeded by Vice President Theodore Roosevelt. McKinley and Roosevelt were responsible for the creation of America's overseas empire as a result of the Spanish American War.

When the war was declared on Spain in 1898 patriotism in Hancock County was intense. The Solomon D. Kempton Post of the Grand Army of Republic at Fortville immediately offered their service to President McKinley. The Spanish American War lasted for four months from April to August of 1898. Indiana furnished 7421 volunteers for the war. There were no battle casualties from Hancock County but 73 died from disease.

Enough. I have told you everything that I know and some things I don't talk to me.

2016-03-11

By Joe Skvarenina

I cannot believe it! I found it and it was right in my own house. In an interview that I did in 1993 with Will Scheiter, Dale Kuhn, Ed Ramsey and Richard Rodebeck and some other Legionnaires on the history of the local American Post #119 it tells that, " Edgar Ridlen World War I Post Commander got each picture of World War II veterans and made a frame of the 70 pictures and put it done in the Memorial Building. He ended up with 960 WW II veteran hanging downstairs in the Memorial Building." Dale Kuhn added that they were first displayed at the County Court House. Now Jim McWhinney and Dave Goodrich who are working on preserving the photos now have the full story. If you want help give them a call they work for the city. These guys have done most of this from their own pocket. The photos are in terrible condition

The American Legion was chartered in Greenfield in 1919. The first meeting was held in the Knights of Pythias Building which was recently a restaurant on North State. The first Club Room or bar was above Pickett's hardware which is a pizza shop. The Post actually met in a suite of offices in the Memorial Building which was there home until 1950-51. At that time they build a post on American Legion place. This site eventually became the county annex William e. Bussell was a lawyer and Bill Wolf's law partner. He was originally appointed in 1919 and he served for a short time in the new year. He was then elected the first commander of the Post. He served went out of office in 1920. Some say that Captain Henry C. Gemmil did the initial work of laying down the foundation. He was a great organizer and a WW I veteran. One of the first thing the American Legion did was start the American Legion Junior Baseball program and the old Sprinkling Can contest. The local American Legion was heavy into youth endeavors in the community.

Enough. I have told you everything that . I know and some things I don't. Talk to me.

2016-03-04

Jim Arthur provides us with an interesting an interesting letter from Zacharias Sipe to Arthur's great great grandfather) his brother, John, who lived in York County, Pennsylvania. The 1863 letter has interesting information about life in Hancock County especially the Willow Branch area.

"Jan 18th, 1863

Dear Brother and Friends. I take my pen in hand to drop a few lines to let you know that we are all well at present except Franklin. He is not stout yet. He had a heart spell of sickness. This fall he head the fever and a swollen leg something like the____. He was very bad for about 6 weeks so that he couldn't help himself at all and Mary Alice she had the ague while this fall but she is well and hardy again. That was the sickness we had all summer. Dear Brother we received your letter this morning and was glad to hear from you and sad to hear you had a bad spell o sickness as the small pos (probably small pox) is very dangerous sometimes and I was glad to hear from your father and mother and the rest of our friends.and hoping as these few lines may find you all in good health again. We would like to see you if we could but we are so far apart that we can't ascertain anything one by letters and we can glad that we can that way.If you write to me again, how (is) George and his family and Elizabeth. Some of the family don't write to me and I am anxious to hear from them. About the draft. We had no draft in our township.There were 6 men liken filling the quota and we made up money and hid men to avoid the draft.. About broom corn , there are very little in this part of the country. Not more. The people want to won youth.I don't know for one closer. The butter country Ohio.. They raise a good deal there so I am told to sell about. I am still here on the old place yet trying to farm a little.. Last summer I raised 175 bushels of wheat. 18 head of hogs, raised one mule. Sold for \$50 18 months old and raised some cattle and stock hogs. Market price, wheat 100, rye 50, corn 30, potatoes 50, apples 50, butter 12, eggs 13, coffee 35, sugar 15, fodder 20/30, chicken \$1.50. Turkeys 50 cents apiece. Leah raised 16 and sold for 50 cents apiece. Franklin he about to pick__. Write soon. Direct your letter to Willow Branch post Hancock Indiana. Zacharias Sipe."

This was the Civil War period in Hancock County and although difficult to read in some cases this letter provides a window on what it was like in the Willow Branch area. Hancock County was Pro Union but did have its share of Confederate soldiers and sympathizes. It is estimated that 209 Hancock County citizens died in the Civil War.

The Hancock County Democrat newspaper gave the following description when Robert E Lee surrendered, "Bells were ringing, bonfires were built, powder was fully used and all the business of the day were suspended."

Enough. I have told you everything that I know and some things I don't. Talk to me.

Zachariah Sipe 1863 Letter



January 18th, 1863 Dear Brother and friends, I take my pen in hand to drop a few lines to you to let you know that we are all well at present except Franklin. He is not stout yet. He had a heart spell of sickness. This fall he had the fever and a swollen leg something like the ----. He was very bad for about 6 weeks so that he couldn't help himself at all and Mary Alice she had the ague while this fall but she is well and hardy again. That was all the sickness we had this summer. Dear Brother we received your letter this morning and was glad to hear from you and sad to hear that you had a bad spell of sickness as the small pos is very dangerous sometimes and I was glad to hear from our father and mother and all the rest of our friends and hoping as these few lines may find you all in good health again. We would like to see you all if we could but we are so far apart that we can't ascertain anything one by letters and we can be glad that we can that way. If you write to me again, how (is) George and his family and Elizabeth. Some of the family don't write to me and I'm anxious to hear from them. About the draft. We had no draft in our township. There was but 6 men liken filling the quota and we made up money and hid men to avoid the draft. About the broom corn, there are very little --- in this part of the country. Not more. The people want for won youth. I don't know one closer. The butter country Ohio. They raise a good deal there so I am told to sell about. I am still here on the old place yet and trying to farm a little. Last summer I raised 175 bushels of wheat, 18 head of hogs, raised one mule. Sold one for \$50 18 months old and raised some cattle and stock hogs. Market price: wheat 100, rye 50, corn 30, potatoes 50, apples 50, butter 12, eggs 13, coffee 35, sugar 15, fodder 20/30, chicken \$1.50. Turkeys 50 cents apiece. Leah raised 16 and sold for 50 cent apiece. Franklin he about to pick ----- Write soon. Direct your letters to Willow Branch, post Hancock, Indiana Zacharias Sipe

2016-02-26

By Joe Skvarenina

I recently received a letter from recent Morris Meek in Maynardville Tennessee. Does the name Meek sound familiar, Meek Street, Meek Addition. Morris tells us that great great uncle Cornwell Meek help layout Greenfield. Also he had two other great uncles who fought in the Civil War. Morris, on a recent visit, found Uncle Jared's stone in Park Cemetery. The other uncle, Noah moved to Kansas. Jared was the first white child born in Hancock County.

The Binford History verifies Morris's story. It says, "The first to settle on the town site were Cornwell Meek, Morris Pierson, Dr. Lot Edwards, William Carr, and Lewis Tyner. Prior to 1828 the date of the establishment of the county seat, S.B. Jackson and Jeremiah Meek, (probably a relative) supplied the wants of the traveling community at their taverns and stables, the former holding forth in the bottom near the Brandywine, and the later in Greenfield." In addition some of the other family connections include Jeremiah Meek is said to be the first settler in Greenfield. Cornwell Meek was a stock trader and dry goods merchant. Joshua Meek was the county recorder for twenty years.

Morris Meek worked for the Spencer family at the Daily Reporter for many years. He also used to swim in the Brandywine. Morris wonders about an Indian Mound near Morristown. I only know of one near Freeport but do not know that exact location.

Thanks for the letter Morris and I would welcome them from the rest of you.

Enough. I have told you everything that I know and some things I don't. Talk to me.

2016-02-19

By Joe Skvarenina

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Alex Pohl writes, "I'm a student at Rose-Hulman working on a senior design project for Hancock County. My team's project is a 5 mile stretch of trail that would be following an existing railroad alignment just south of US 40. Trail portions already exist on the old rail alignment and are named "Pennsy trail" if that gives any helpful information. I'm reaching out because my team is analyzing the possibility of repurposing an existing railroad plate girder bridge. I've attached an image of it. If you have any information on the old railroad, specifically the bridge, then that would be really helpful." Can anyone help Alex? Let me know!

The Knightstown & Shelbyville railway was completed about 1848 and operated until 1848. According to the Richman history it crossed the southeast corner of Blue River township, following the south valley of the Blue River. The old grades are still seen in some areas in the Township. The Bee Line now known as the branch of the Big Four, passed through McCordsville and Fortville was constructed in 1850. In 1831 the Indiana Central railroad now known as the Pennsylvania line was constructed through Hancock county. In 1867 work was begun on the Junction railway also known as the Cincinnati, Hamilton & Dayton. In 1881 the Indiana, Bloomington & Western was organized but trains were not run over the road until later 1882 or early 1883. In 1890 the Branch of the Big Four was under construction running through Shirley.

It is interesting to note that prior to the construction of the Indiana Central Railroad a horse drawn stagecoach made weekly trips between Dayton Ohio and Indianapolis. First it traveled over the Old Centerville Road and then the National Road, it took approximately a week to make the journey.

Enough. I told you everything I know and some things I don't. Talk to me.

2016-02-13

By Joe Skvarenina

Marlena Linn points us to some interesting information. In 1867 the first ordinance was passed by Greenfield council to grade, gravel and add sidewalks to the streets beginning at State and Main Streets. Pennsylvania was the first street to be improved with sidewalks. In 1876 a serious system of street improvements began with the paving streets. In 1897 Howard and Whiskey Alley were first paved with bricks. At first sidewalks were also brick. Today the only street in Greenfield which is paved with bricks is Depot street. Also by the Wedding Chapel on North Street the alley is paved. Do you know of others?

Charlie Gildwell has just finished a new booklet entitled "Behind the Badge" which is the history of the Greenfield Police Department. The City of Greenfield was incorporated in 1850, the town was incorporated as a city in 1876. Prior to the 1920's possible into the 1920's it is believed Law Enforcement was a Town Marshall system. The Town Marshall was appointed or elected. The first Marshall elected but refused to qualify was Nathan Crawford. N.P Howard was appointed and until 1922 in his place, Howard was also a Doctor. Dr. Howard's house is the basket and yarn shop next to Bradley Methodist Church. In 1865 Henry Newby, 1904 Henry Richey, and 1922 Charles Nigh served as Town Marshalls. John Francis Mulvihill served as Chief of Police for 1926-1928 and should probably be considered the first with that title. Mulvihill also served three terms also as the Hancock County Sheriff 1917, 1919, 1921 and until 1922 He also served as a justice of the peace.

Charlie Glidwell served as chief from 1970-1983 and has served the longest to date. Did you know that the Greenfield GPD was responsible for Animal Control in the 1960's. The first detective of the Greenfield Police was Fred Offutt. Also included in the list of investigators are Jack Heiden, Jerry Wasson, Terry Bucksot and probably others. I have placed two copies in the local history room at the Library if you want to take a look.

Hey Jim McWhinney and Dave and Denise Goodrich are attempting to save and restore photos of veterans that were in frames in the old Memorial Building basement and originally assembled and framed in front of the Courthouse. Do you know how the project originally came about? These photos will be digitized and placed in a poster display. But the photos need saved. But we would like to know the history of the project? please let me know! Let's help honor the veterans.

Enough. I have told you everything I know and some things I don't. Talk to me.

2016-02-05

BY

Joe Skvarenina

Budd Goodyear from Wasilla Alaska writes" I grew up in Greenfield in the 1940's and 1950's at approximately 8337 N. 25 W. West of Maxwell North of 500 North . There was a cemetery just north of our home where the road swings back north after northwesterly turn. At on e point the land north belonged to Pauline Watson. Her grandson Mike built a house north of the cemetery. I missed your story about cemeteries about always wondered about this one."

In talking to Nancy Leach from the Pioneer Cemetery Association I believe you are talking about the Mt. Carmel Cemetery. The Sue Baker book tells us, The Mt. Carmel Cemetery is is section one in the northwest part of Center Township located on 25 west between 500 and 600 North. In 1883 the Mt.Carmel Methodist Church was organized in a log schoolhouse situated on the east bluff of Sugar Creek,near the present site of the cemetery. The membership of the church increased in 1853 a frame building was constructed by Henry Moore at the cost of \$800. Services in the church were regularly until the early 1900.

The church is now gone but two concrete posts remain at the north boundary of the burying ground that indicated that long ago there was a gate and fence around the site. There were probably more than 100 graves at the site. Today many of the stones are down,

Enough. I have told you everything that I know and some things I don't. Talk to me.

2016-01-29

By Joe Skvarenina

The Indiana Genealogical Society recently announced the appointment of Paul McNeil as the Hancock County Genealogist. Paul completed his undergraduate degree in History at Ball State University, and received his Master of Library Science degree from Indiana University, specializing in archives and records management. Paul is in charge of the Indiana/Hancock History Room at the Hancock County Public Library, and earlier this year was awarded the Indiana Genealogical Society Library Staff Educational Scholarship, which allowed him to attend a Genealogy Library Services course through the University of Wisconsin-Madison. He is also the project director for a Library Services and Technology Act digitization grant, which will digitize numerous microfilmed newspapers for online publication as part of the Hoosier State Chronicles. Mr. McNeil is an incredible resource for individuals interested in researching their Hancock County roots. He can be contacted at pmcneil@hcplibrary.org. Congrats to Paul

I have been doing some research for Beverly Estell in Shirley. She is attempting to determine if Telestar Electric guitars were ever manufactured in Shirley. This would have probably have been the 1967 the Sparkle Body Electric Guitars which are now vintage. In 1967 the company changed names to Tele-Sar Musical Instrument Company now subsidiary of Music Craft Electronic Corporation. Some tell me it might have been made at the cheese factory in Shirley. I know that Jay Wilfong had manufactured speakers at Grant City for a time. Does anyone have a clue on this mystery?

More on Hancock County Native Americans, Jane Wakeland tells that her son Brent lives north of Philadelphia and finds arrowheads in his backyard. Some say Delaware Indians had villages in this area. Marlena Linne writes, "Several years ago I talked to a lady who grew up at the Northwest corner of County Road 300 West and Highway 40. It's just west of where Highway 40 crosses the Sugar Creek...She remembered there used to be a big rock in the neighborhood that people would come to see. The owners got tired of the hassle and decided to destroy it. Marlena wonders if this would have been the rock written about that native American would go and find because it was sacred. Others say that this sacred site was at Gem. It was recorded that Cyrus Steele from Buck Creek Township remembers his mother speaking of Indians coming back and camping near the site. Do you know anything more about Native Americans in Hancock County. For example there is some rare mention of Indian Mounds but I believe that these relics were destroyed by early farmers. Some Indian skeletons have been found in gravel pits.

Thanks to Dave Gray and Paul McNeil and the Hancock Public Library for nominating me for the Herbert Hawkins History Award from the Indiana Historical Society which I received at the recent Founders Day. It was really a nice evening.

Enough. I have told you everything that I know and some things I don't. Talk to me.

2016-01-22

By Joe Skvarenina

In November Rebecca Crowe and Phyllis Kingen gave an excellent presentation on the history of Vernon Township at the Hancock County Historical Society's Roundtable. They shared with the group many interesting points. For instance, did you know that the history of the Fortville Methodist Church dates back to the 1840's with an original log church building. The church and cemetery were first called Staats Chapel and Cemetery. A revival was held in Peter Staats' barn in 1856 and those converted organized themselves into the Fortville Methodist Episcopal Church. At that point the 36 converts moved into a log building and then to the loft of the Noel Building and the Hudson's Grocery. A frame church was built in 1859 and dedicated in 1865. It sat in the back of the current Methodist Church parking lot. The current church was dedicated in 1902. Some interesting facts on the current structure is that the bell was donated by the Union Traction Company (Interurban), the marble steps came for the Bates House in Indianapolis which were walked on by Abraham Lincoln. Also the west stained glass window in the church was paid for by the Grand Army of the Republic, Fortville Post and was dedicated to fallen soldiers and veterans of the Civil War. If you have time go and see it.

Did you ever hear of Denney's Corner? Denney's Corner is south of Highway 234 on Fortville Pike and 700N. It was the home of the Dunkard (German Baptist) Church, Denney's School and the A.H. Denney Farms. The church is now gone but the other buildings remain. The school was converted into a residence in 1946. When the Dunkard Church property was sold the Denny's were re interred at Gravel Lawn. The Denney Barn is now called Barn Sign Works.

Also in Vernon Township there are two round barns. One serves has served as a bed and breakfast and the other is the Frank Littleton Barn which is were Phyllis Kingen and her family farm. This round barn was built in 1903. I do believe that it is Indiana's largest round barn.

Thanks to Rebeca and Phyllis. They are two excellent historians.

Enough. I have told you everything that I know and some things I don't. Talk to me.

2016-01-15

By Joe Skvarenina

You don't hear much about the "War to end all Wars" in Hancock County" But it was a big deal in town. There were 840 residents who participated in WW I. Of those 18 died and there is a plaque commemorating their service in the Memorial Building. Their names are listed on it. In fact the Memorial Building which was built in 1925 is a memorial to the WW I effort. When it was constructed the American Legion was housed at the site and the Legion had first rights for facility use. Taylor Murford a veteran of the GAR and of course the Civil War dedicated the building and laid the cornerstone. Out front of the Memorial Building there were at one time two WW I cannons which were melted down for scrap to be used in WW II. During the WW I era there was a Red Cross organization in every township. They knitted socks and rolled dressings. On the home front everyone had victory garden and rationing was in effect. There was a county rationing board. You could have two lbs of meat per week. Omer Jackson was county Fuel Administrator. There were also guidelines for the slaughter of animals, use of sugar and the use of food stuffs which might be considered a military necessity. Starting in 1918 you had meatless days, wheatless days, and porkless days. Starting 1911 there was a Hancock County Council for Defense and Judge Earl Sample appointed the members.. This council was responsible for the enrollment recruitment of women for service, the Home Guard, and the selling of Liberty Bonds. Each township had a defense council

The Shrikey Historical Society is beginning to update its published history. Do you have anything to contribute? Let me know.

Enough. I have told you everything I know and some things I don't. Talk to me.

2016-01-2016

By Joe Skvarenina

I had the opportunity to go to the Veterans Day luncheon sponsored by the Greenfield Chamber and the Hancock Public Library. It was a very appropriate event. One project that is being worked on is the restoration fourteen panels of pictures that were in the basement of the Memorial Building for many years. There is now a real effort to conserve the photos and restore them add some new ones. This effort is being led by Jim McWhinney, Dave and Denise Goodrich and Greg Roland. There are 1,000 photos and mostly of WW II. Go to <http://www.hancockcountyheroes.org> for more information. Thank these people for their efforts. By the way do you know how the photos got place in the Memorial Building in the first place. Who was the organizing g force Let me know!

Greenfield recently inducted a few people into the Greenfield alumni Hall of Fame. Walter Worland was one of those and he is 92 years young. He did not graduate but he received in 2004 an honorary high school diploma. He left high school to join the Army Air Corp after December 7, 1941. When he returned fro the service he went to work for the Greenfield Daily Reporter and worked as a printer. He later owned a local newspaper and was also the editor. In 1988 he retired s the editor of Freemason Magazine in Franklin Indiana. World was very active in civic affairs and democrat politics. He served on the Greenfield City Council for 12 years.

Speaking of veterans. There are two Revolutionary War Veterans buried in Hancock County, William Hatton and Mosby Childers. Childers is buried some place in Brown Township but no one can identify the site. Hatton is buried in the Bicentennial Park on South State Street.. An Mexican American Veterans Association was established in Hancock County in 1897. The Mexican American War was from 1846 to 1848. The last encampment ended in 1907. The last Mexican American War veteran died in 1911. His name was Jeremiah Herndon. There were five veterans. The next great conflict was the Civil War and 142 Hancock County boys died in this action.

Enough. I have told you everything that I now and some things I don't. Talk to me.

2016-01-01

By Joe Skvarenina

Happy New year!!!

Noelle Steele want to know if there are any Indiana mounds at the new fairgrounds site? Some claim it is true but does anyone know for sure? I know that there is the old pauper cemetery in a clump of tree from the old poor farm. If you go into the clump you can see the sunken graves. William Kemmer the African American who was accused of rape but not given the benefit of trial is buried in this pauper's plot. Supposedly the noose is still around his neck. Are there plans to protect this plot?

John Rasor stopped by the Library the other day to talk. Ruth Apple's old home on the Old Centerville Road today 100 South is an old stage coach stop. Rasor says you can see egg shells mixed in the mortar and there is five fireplaces in the old house. Also he tells that the Napoleon Trace is the Old Carthage Road or 700 East. The old Trace was the first road by which pioneers entered the county. Does anyone know about the old factory which was located in Charlottesville but long since gone? Speaking of businesses in Charlottesville do you remember Weldon Schultz's Plumbing, or the Pure oil station, did Bill Barton work on school buses at the site? How about the filling station which now is a car lot? Do you remember Robert's Motel and Inn? Some say this at one time was a stage Coach Inn. Do you remember the King's Restaurant in the 1940's in Charlottesville on the South Carthage Road?

Have you ever eaten at the Copper Kettle in Morristown? The Junction Railroad served the community Shelbyville to Knightstown in 1849 and it was 25 miles long. It was abandoned in 1858 and the grain elevators at Morristown became useless. In 1860 the building was converted into the Davis Tavern. In 1885 the name was changed to the Valley House. In 1923 with a new owner the name was changed to the Copper Kettle. James Whitcomb Riley was a frequent visitor. Other visitors over the time included Henry Ford, Charles Lindbergh, and Herbert Hoover. In 2004 Gray Trudeau and Jane Pauley held their wedding reception at the site. Presidential candidate Wendel Wilkie would also hold strategy sessions at the site. There are many priceless antiques in the building.

Do you know who John Delany? he was born in Virginia in 1789 and in February, 1833 he purchased 18.24 acres of land from James and Sarah Parker for the sum of \$1,300 which would be \$37,142.86 today. He opened up a grocery and tavern. In 1860 he sold his holdings to William Nichols for \$4,000 or \$110789.12 in today's value. In the 1860 sale he reserved a quarter acre of land for a grave yard which still exist today on Route 52. He had three wives and two are buried on site. Delany according to the Binford History was a mulatto or in today's terms and African American. I know that there are other Africian American sites in Hancock County but the problem is identifying them. Do you know of any others?

Enough. I have told you everything that I now and some things I don't. Talk to me.

2016-01-01

By Joe Skvarenina

Happy New Year! Jim Arthur recently presented a program about Sugar Creek Township to the Hancock County Historical Society. Here are some things he told us you might not know. The township took its name from the Sugar Creek the principal stream in the area. It was organized in 1828 as one of the first three townships in the county. Later the Northern part of the township was taken to form Jones Township organized in 1838 which no longer exists. In 1953 Sugar Creek was organized into its present boundaries. It currently contains thirty-six sections having a total of 21,805 acres.

Also a factor in the development of Sugar Creek Township was the development of the German Community. This area of German settlement was bounded by Highway Road 40 on the north, and Highway 52 on the south, Road 500 west on the east and 800 west on the west. Carl Julius Leopold Albert Von Bonge was the first settler. He was followed Albert Lange also from Prussia. Prussia was the German state around Berlin. Other Germans followed making the area the garden spot of Hancock County. Do any of you know anything about the German community?

I had the opportunity to go on a road trip with John Hardin the other day. We went to the Vinton House in Cambridge City and there is a museum depicting the Whitewater canal and some National Road history on the third floor. The Vinton House was an inn on the old Whitewater Canal. Canals like the Whitewater and others are often a forgotten era of Indiana history. Some of them had begun in 1832 and lasted until the 1870's in some areas. There were no canals in Hancock county because they depend on large stream to keep them watered.

The Vinton House Museum also shows the National road during different periods of its construction. It shows section of the roads where the wagons having to travel over stumps which might have ripped out the bottoms or the corduroy roads with the rough passages this would have presented. Other sites in Cambridge City includes the Overbeck Museum and the Overbeck house where the sisters produced their pottery for 1911-1955. The Overbeck Museum is in the Cambridge Library. It is an interesting road trip.

Enough. I have told you everything that I know and some things I don't. Talk to me.

2015-12-25

By Joe Skvarenina

Rick Henley writes, "I was born on the Blue River in Rush County, Carthage area. I cannot picture a Blue River in Hancock County unless it is in the vary southeast of the county. ...My ancestors settled in Rush County around 1835.I am one of the last descendants..."

The first settlers came into Blue River Township in Hancock County around 1818. Blue River Township takes its name from the Blue River the principal stream in the township. Other streams in the Township are Six Mile and Nameless Creek. Other streams and rivers in the county include Sugar Creek, Brandywine Creek, Buck Creek, Little Brandywine Creek, Little Sugar Creek Flat Fork, Swamp Creek and Little Swamp Creek.

On these waterways early pioneers many mills were constructed. The first mills were water power followed later by steam mills. These mills were corn crackers, and saw mills to provide the necessities for the pioneers. Other early pioneers industries included tanneries, tie, shingle,woolen and flax factories. Also there were blacksmith shops and nurseries. In fact Elijah Tyner was a prominent nurseryman who had a store south of the Shiloh Church.

The first white settlers entered the southeastern corner of the Blue River Township. In 1818 Andrew Evans built his log cabin in the vicinity Petersburg which was developed and was named after Peter Binford. Peterburg has long disappeared. Peterburg was a stop on the old Knightstown Shelbyville Railroad built in 1858. This line ran off and on for ten years. It was one of the first steam railroads west of the Alleghenies.

Enough. I have told you everything that I know and some things I don't talk to me.

2015-12-19

By Joe Skvarenina

Amanda Clark writes," to let you know about a new genealogy society forming in the east central Indiana area. We are in the planning stages right now and will begin having general membership meetings in January 2016. Our name is East Central Indiana Genealogy Alliance, and we cover the five counties of Delaware, Hancock, Henry, Madison, and Randolph. Our mission is education, for beginning and advanced genealogists alike. I'm reaching out to you in hopes of spreading the word to Hancock County residents about the group. We plan on having monthly meetings and moving the meetings around to the different counties. Our website is www.ECIGA.info for more information, plus we have a Facebook page (search for East Central Indiana Genealogy Alliance). We are a not-for-profit group focused on helping those interested in learning more about their family history and supporting local historical societies and repositories.

Our last planning meeting was Saturday, November 21, 2015, at the Randolph County Historical Society in Winchester, IN. We begin at 11 a.m. and the meetings have been running to around 1 p.m. We would love to have people from Hancock County join us in the planning and could have our final planning meeting in Hancock County. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me at mandora.cmt@gmail.com." They are looking for a meeting place in Hancock County.

Nancy Finister shares with us her research on her home which was Larry Fox's old home on Wood Street. Mr. Winfield Scott Fries was the long time the owner of the property and he died there in 1908. Mr. Fries served for many years as the county surveyor, and owned the Hancock County Flooring Mill and also the Mohawk Mill. He started his career as a school teacher in 1873 at the old Macedonia School which was on 100 South. It is interesting to note during those days the Township Trustees were responsible for the schools in their townships. They would visit the school and publish their findings in the Hancock Democrat or other newspapers. In 1897 Mr. Fries, Surveyor was scolded soundly in the Hancock County Democrat repaving whiskey alley to the discontent of some the citizens. it seems that he recently had paved it with brick. Fries paid his workers a 1.00 per day. Do any of you know the location of whiskey alley?

Stacey and Stu Poe live on Walnut Street in the old Earl Brown house. Earl Brown was Iona Black brother. Mrs. Black was the mother of the famous artist Richard Black. Earl traveled extensively through France and Germany but I don't know much more about him. Do you? Stacey and Stu take their study of history seriously. Stacey owns the dance study in the old Masonic Building.

Enough. I have told you everything that I know and some things I don't. Talk to me.

2015-12-11

By Joe Skvarenina

We honor veterans in November with Veterans Day but is it enough? I received facts on a veteran whose story needs to be told and thanks to Steve Dike who created the web site <http://tankdestroyer.net> and Bill's son Ronnie Brees it will be told.

William Brees was born in Greenfield on April 6, 1922 and graduated from Eden High School in 1941. He entered the army on December 16, 1942. He was assigned to Headquarters Company 607th Tank Destroyer Battalion, He drove a halftrack. The 607th landed in Liverpool, England in April of 1944 and in June it landed on Utah Beach during "D" Day invasion. Brees survived all this action but was later was killed by friendly fire at the end of war.

Ronnie was always told the war was over, and his dad was assigned to the M.P.'s and was on duty down by the docks in Hofkirchen Germany. At this port, American troops were loaded on transports to come home. Two American G.I.'s had been drinking and were fighting and his dad stepped in to break it up, and one of them had a gun, it went off hitting his dad in the neck.

Over the years, Ronnie tried several times to find the official report of what really happened to his dad. Finally on March 9th 2014 his son Brian received an email from Steve Dyke with the full Court Marshall Record attached and it summed up as follows.

On September 8, 1945 about 10 p.m. there was a company party to celebrate end of the war being held at a local dance hall when an altercation started between two American G.I.'s which turned serious. A third serviceman stepped in to break the fight up, and one of the other servicemen pulled a gun and hit the intervening soldier on the head and the gun discharged. The bullet struck Bill Brees, a bystander, in the neck. He was standing at a distance from the fight. He was immediately transferred to the 65th Field Hospital and later to the 250th Station Hospital in Regensburg, Germany. He was paralyzed from the waist down at the time.. Later he was transferred to the Cushing General Hospital in Framington, Massachusetts. He never left the hospital and passed away July 7, 1946 as a result of the wounds. Some say he lost the will to live. Bill had earned the following awards and medals; Good Conduct, EAME Campaign with five stars, American Defense Service, WW II Victory, and the Army of Occupation. He was buried at Park Cemetery in Greenfield with many of his other comrades in arms.

The other soldier who shot bill was fined \$20.00. Thanks to Bill Brees and others for their service. Enough. I have told you everything I know and some things I don't. Talk to me.

2015-12-04

By Joe Skvarenina

During the early days of settlement small bands of Indiana often roamed central Indiana. They traded with settlers or trapped fur bearing animals to be used for trade. They often camped on land of local farmers while in the county. The old state road, the Centerville Road, ran east and west across the county before the completion of the National Road was a well used route of travel for the Indians and some of the settlers were fearful they would take children or cause other mischief.

Of all the townships, perhaps Sugar Creek has been most successful in recalling the lore of the Indians. The Delaware Indians had two villages within Sugar creek on the north side of US 40 just west of Philadelphia. Another village is on the land comprising Palestine Cemetery. The Indians had a corn field near the old part of the cemetery. Mr J.N. Snodgrass tells in an article in "New Palestine History 1871-1971" that probably 200 Indians lived there and gave the name of their leaders as Wa-Wa-See, whose son was Tuck-Ohee.

Another story is that there was a pond north of Gem that had a large rock with markings near its shore thought to be sacred to Native Americans. Local stories tell of Indians returning to the area to use the site long after Indians were gone from the area. Is the rock still there?

Do any of you have any native American stories about the Hancock county. I have told you everything that I know and some things i don't. Talk to me.

2015-11-27

By Joe Skvarenina

"I don't think we've been introduced - my name is Raina Regan, I work at Indiana Landmarks in our Central Regional Office. I took over the position previously held by Rebecca Smith.

I was approached by Candace Hudziak in Greenfield who is interested in working with the county on the preservation of the Memorial Building. It is a county owned building on North Street near SR 9 just north of downtown Greenfield. We're wondering if you might have any suggestions on who to approach at in County government about having a discussion about the future of the building. Candace lives very close to the building and believes the building needs some imminent structural and building repairs." Raina I talked to Brad Armstrong one of the Hancock County Commissioners and he indicated there is money in the county budget for Memorial Building repair.

Dedicated on September 20, 1923 the Memorial Building is located on the northwest corner of North and State Streets. Originally the second floor was devoted for use by the American Legion and Auxiliary. The ground floor was to be used for agricultural lectures and other community activities. Currently it houses various offices. Taylor Murford, a Civil War soldier and member of the GAR (Grand Army of the Republic) laid building cornerstone. Later on October 16, 1942 two WW I cannons were removed from the front of the Memorial Building to be used for scrap for new weapons. One cannon was a small Austrian howitzer and the other a small German field piece. Both guns were brought to Greenfield by American Legion Post #119. If you go on the Memorial Building lawn you can still see the location of the guns.

The building is worth preserving. Enough I have told you everything that I know and some things I don't. Talk to me.

2015-11-20

By Joe Skvarenina

Jerry True writes, "In one of your recent articles in the Greenfield Reporter you mentioned the McNamee cemetery in Sugar Creek Township. You stated there are only four graves at this site. I have several ancestors buried at this location including my great-great-great grandfather Whitfield True along with my great-great-great-great grandfather Henry Hawk. Findagrave.com lists 36 burials in this cemetery. I know Sue Baker's book lists several burials, also. The cemetery is in sad disrepair and there has been development near it recently. We are hopeful some repairs might be made in the future."

Jerry you are correct and it is my error. The maintenance of the burial plot is the responsibility of the township trustee.

New Palestine Cemetery also has an interesting history. Through the years this burying plot has had three different names. First it was named Murnan burying ground and was dedicated when William Leachman dug the first graves sometime in the 1850's for the burial of his twin grandchildren, the babies of Henry and Malina Merlau. In the late 1800's Mrs Elizabeth Cones Murnan expanded the plot changing the name to Crown Point Cemetery Association. Later it was determined by the Secretary of State there was another Crown Point Cemetery so that is when it became the New Palestine Cemetery and it was dedicated as such on September 30, 1904.

A Mr. Mattox was the first death in Sugar Creek Township. Enough. I have told you everything that I know and some things I don't. Talk to me.

2015-11-13

By Joe Skvarenina

Rick Adams writes I was talking to someone from out of state recently and they asked where the name "New Palestine" originated ?. They assumed that it was settled by people immigrating from Palestine. I assume that is not so but have no idea where it came from. We've lived here nearly 25 years and I don't know the story.

New Palestine was laid out by Jonathan Edwards On October 1, 1838. His house was the first to be built, and next door was his store and Post Office which he operated. The land from which New Palestine was carved out was entered by John Weston on May 1, 1824.

For many years the town had difficulty with its name. The post office was known as Sugar Creek. The railroad and express stations as Palestine and the name of the town itself was named New Palestine. Because of a town in Kosciusko was named Palestine people were having their mail going to the wrong place. A great deal of the mail, of course was addressed to Palestine instead of Sugar Creek by people who simply knew the name of the town. Through the efforts E.F. Faut and Congressman Bynum the name of the Post Office was changed from Sugar Creek to New Palestine on January 16, 1889. The name of the railroad and express office was changed to New Palestine. The town was incorporated May 22, 1871. Some this information can be found in the Richman history and also there is a marker in town at the site of the Edwards store. It is interesting to note the oldest town in the township is Philadelphia platted on April 11, 1838 by Charles Atherton.

Enough. I have told you everything that I know and some things I don't. Talk to me.

2015-11-05

By Joe Skvarenina

Dave Gray asked me the other day about the concrete pillars in Fountain Lake at Fountain Lake Estates. I was told those pillars were put there by an early developer with the idea of putting a roof over the lake. It never happened but the pillars are still there. Does anyone remember a Super X Pharmacy in town? I believe there was one at Green Meadows?

Bob Barnhart provides us with an old scrapbook circa 1972. In it a Greenfield Daily Reporter article tells that in 1959 the average rescue calls made were about 20 per month and in July 1972 the ambulance made 77 emergency runs. According to Earl McCarthy former Civilian Defense Chief there was a need for new equipment and a new ambulance was about to be purchased. Did you know that the Hancock County Rescue had its beginnings with a Civil Defense Police Unit formed in October, 1958 at Greenfield. Training was provided by State Civil Defense Instructors. This extensive three month course was climaxed with a mock attack on the Hancock County Court House with people trapped on the top floor. These disaster victims were evacuated on tam lines, stretchers, baskets and rope hitches utilizing all the skills learned at the recent training. Max Hendryx of Hendryx Mortuaries donated one of their ambulances for use with the unit. In 1963 a new ambulance was purchased from National Coach Company in Knightstown. Members of the unit had a personally sign a note guaranteed payment from various fund raising events.

Did you know that the Interurban tracks are still under the payment on the south side of 40. Greenfield businessmen promoted the Interurban Line between Greenfield and Indianapolis, Construction was awarded to C.M. Kirkpatrick of Greenfield work started in 1899 with the line regularly carrying passengers on July 17, 1900.

On September 12, 1904 the Indianapolis Traction Terminal opened as a central station for all traction companies coming into Indianapolis allowing them to better coordinate their services. In July 1905 the first joint ticket office was opened in Indianapolis. The first of its kind anywhere. It was the largest and busiest interurban terminal in the world. At its peak it handled 500 arrivals and departures per day. As the WW II approached the Interurban era grew to a close and only 14 electric railroads remained in Indiana. On December 31, 1946 the Interurban period officially ended when the Evansville and Ohio Valley made its final run The Terre Haute , Indianapolis, and Eastern Traction Line closed in Greenfield in around 1936. Riley Park Tire is an old Interurban barn. The tracks are still there.

Enough. I have told you everything that I know and some things I don't . Talk to me.

2015-10-31

By Joe Skvarenina

When did the first humans arrive in Hancock County? The earliest possible Indian artifacts found in Hancock County date back to 9000 BC. There are ninety-five identifiable archeological sites in the county which cover the Paleo Indians to the Archaic (or ancient) period along with Woodland Indian Culture. Arrowheads along with other stone implements are still found in the area. In addition a few skeletons have been discovered in gravel pits over the years. For example on the north side of the National Road, west of Sugar Creek a skeleton with relics were found many years ago. According to the Richmann History of Hancock County there was very little evidence of mound builders. In 1885 the State Geologist writes , "There is, in section 11 Township 16, range 7 some very curious earthworks probably belonging to the age of Mound Builders. These are located on the farm of Freeman H. Braddock, and lie south side of Brandywine, at the extreme point of a very abrupt bend of that creek. A ridge of clay land some ten feet above the creek bottom and covered with Oak timber, projects into a piece of marshy land to within three feet of the creek. From this point a levee, three feet high and ten feet wide, has been constructed to the ancient bed of the stream. The excavation which furnished the earth for the embankment is distinctly seen in the projecting point of high ground, and immediately back are three pits about eight feet in diameter and six feet deep, and east of these about ten feet are two other pits of the same dimensions, but not quite so deep.. These are evidently artificial and ancient, for large trees are now growing in the sides of the pits and embankment. About fifty yards east of these pits was formerly a small pond, which may have been an excavation but probably was natural. It is now drained. When, what purpose these works were made, we venture no conjecture."

Enough. I have told you every thing that I know and some things I don't. Talk to me.

2015-10-24

By Joe Skvarenina

An interesting story about Hancock County can be found on the United Shawnee web site. "After Tecumseh's death in 1818 about 40% of his warriors and their families decided to remain together as a Shawnee group. By 1840 there were 34 Shawnee communities existing in Ohio, Indiana, Kentucky, West Virginia, Pennsylvania and a few other states. Thick Water, who as Tecumseh's first cousin, best friend and body guard became the "leader" of the remnant Shawnee group. The Remnant Shawnee leadership continues through Thick Water's line for seven generations to today's date. The name Thick Water in Shawnee is Poughp which eventually became Pope.

The spring 2000 edition of "Midwest Folklore" goes on to tell us, "The current Chief Hawk Pope comes from Blue River Township. According to Chief Pope the community was formed several decades ago when a man one-quarter Indian owned a general store in Greenfield. This man also homesteaded some land in the county and when he acquired official ownership of it he sold parcels for use for one dollar apiece to families 'too Indian' to be allowed to homestead land themselves. The families lived on this tract semi-communally; one farmed hay; another raised chickens; another husbanded cows. Neighbors outside the community knew of the group's existence but didn't care; community members didn't bother anyone and they often did things the other farmers wanted to farm out." I was once told they would have meetings in the old Brandywine School and the janitor was a member of the Shawnee community in Blue River. Hawk Pope was elected chief in 1971 and currently is a sign painter around the Indianapolis area. Today there are 600 members of the Remnant Shawnee band around the country.

Enough. I have told you everything that I know and some things I don't. Talk to me.

2015-10-17

By Joe Skvarenina

Indiana will soon be 200 years old. Can you imagine. What do you know about Hancock County 200 years ago.?

The Delaware were the predominate Indian group in Hancock County. But some say the Shawnees were also in Blue River and Brandywine Townships. The Delaware Indians are members of an Algonkian speaking tribe who called themselves the Lanape or Lenni Lanape. The word Lenape standing alone means "Common People". Lenni Lenape means "Genuine Man" or "Original People" in the Delaware language. Delaware is not an Indian word and they are the only ones to have a complete Anglicized name. It is derived from Thomas West, Lord de la Warr , an early Virginia colonial governor. Thomas, Lord de la Warr name was given to a bay and river and it was later modified to Delaware. In 1806 William Anderson or Kikthawenund became principal chief of the tribe until his death in 1830. The city of Anderson is named after him.

The first 50 years after 1828 and the county's founding the settlers were busy ditching the and draining the fields and pastures for farming. As a result many of the materials left behind by Indians were destroyed. A family living on Fortville Pike notice many "gold rings" could be seen across their field so they called in a team from Indiana University to investigate. The team from IU discovered these rings was where the Indians split rocks around a fire to shape axes and other stone utensils. It was determined that this location was a point where tribes came to trade from a wide central Indiana area and beyond. Other sites have been discovered in Hancock County where a bridge was widened over the Blue River.

During the early days of settlement small band of Indians often roamed central Indiana. They traded with the settlers or trapped fur bearing animals to trade. They often camped on land of local farmers when they were in the county. The old state road (the Old Centerville Road) that ran east and west across the county before the National Road was completed was used by Indian bands and some local people worried about Indian danger on the old Pike. The Old Centerville Pike ran 1 or 2 miles south of the Old National Road. It is possible that 100 South follows the path of the old road.

Enough. I have told you all that I know and some things I don't. Talk to me.

2015-10-10

By Joe Skvarenina

December 11, 1816 will mark Indiana's 200th birthday and what a celebration it will be. The first settlers came into Hancock County about 1818. So what was Hancock County like in the early days?

Hancock County and the surrounding areas of central Indiana were peopled with various native peoples before the arrival settlers. Before true settlement and development could take place several treaties with Indians gradually cleared the way. The Treaty of St. Mary's is usually referred to as the point when local land became available for settlement. When the land became available for settlement a political act to form government was necessary. The State Legislature of the four year old State of Indiana proceeded its portion of the "New Purchase" into the counties of Delaware and Wabash and present day Hancock was part of Delaware. The earliest information on the settlement of Hancock County would be found in the archives related to the early Delaware County. The Legislature further divided the area of Delaware County in 1823 by creating Madison County and in its original form included Hancock County. The final adjustment came in 1828 when the Northern boundary of Madison County was moved to its current location and Hancock County was created in the southern half of old Madison County.

When Hancock was first organized the area was wet and swampy and there was about 400 settlers living in the Hancock in 1828. The area was unbroken wilderness with numerous Indians along with wild deer, rattle snakes, wolves and other critters. The swamp provided excellent hunting grounds for the Indians. The first road was the Napoleon Trace which extended through Blue River, Jackson, and Green Townships. In 1814 when Hancock was still part of Madison nine peaceful Indians were camping along the Fall Creek and they were ambushed and killed by a band of white men.. A trial was held at Pendleton and they were convicted. This was the first time that whites were prosecuted for killing Indians. The Infamous "Massacre at Fall Creek" became a book.

Enough. I have told everything that I know and some things I don't. Talk to me.

2015-10-03

By Joe Skvarenina

The past presents us with many interesting characters and individuals who passed through our corporate memory. Two of those were Tubby Toms and his wife Adeline. I am doing a book on Nameless Creek and the Toms and would like to know what information you might have available? Toms and his wife initially leased and then donated the Nameless Creek Campground to the youth of Hancock County. The Camp was founded in 1951 Jerry Bell and many other interest community members have recently donated much time and energy to restore the campsite to its former glory and it is well worth a second look by each of you.

Toms was a political writer and ultimately outdoor columnist for the Indianapolis News and he lived north of Morristown on the Hancock and Shelby Line. The house is still there and the county line runs through a room which once served as Toms's study in which he had drawn a dotted line to indicate its location. His nature column was called "Out in the Open". William Lowell Tubby Toms was also known as an accurate weather prophet and he once wrote, "It must be spring. Snow drops are blooming, the owl has flown into the woods to sing lullabies and my goat is shedding its winter coat". Tubby was fairly eccentric with a great sense of humor according to his great nephew Tom Lund. Lund tells that Toms would drive his Corvair on the trails of Nameless Creek until Lund's father called a halt because of the danger. Wife Adeline was a WW II pilot who flew planes to England and was a friend of Amelia Earhart. There is a cabin on the property which Tubby built whose chimney has 92 stones from each of Indiana's various counties.

Now some say there were Indians Mounds at Nameless Creek. do any of know the location? Any information Tubby, Adeline, or Nameless Creek you have will help finish this book.

Enough. I have told you everything that I know and some things I don't. Talk to me.

2015-09-26

By Joe Skvarenina

At one time there were three theaters in downtown Greenfield. McCleerey's Sporting Goods was site of the State Theater. According to the owners the projection booth is still in the upstairs. The Riley also called the Why Not Theater was at the location of the National Road Insurance Company. The shape of the old theater is outlined with a white strip at the top. The third was the Weil Theater was later called the Village and now is called the Rick's. Pat Elmore provides us with a picture of the last day of operation for the Village, June 23, 2003. This was the last movie establishment to operate in downtown Greenfield. Walter Weil owned the Weil Theater and the Weil Lumber Company. He had extensive real estate holdings and he owned stock in the Greenfield Banking Company. He died in 1956.

I went to a Indiana Bicentennial planning meeting recently for Hancock County. On December 11, 2016 Indiana will be two hundred years old. I believe the the first white settlers entered Hancock County in 1818. It was vast wilderness in which there were numerous Indians The first school house was a log cabin built in Blue River Township about 1823. In 1824 Joshua Wilson built the first grist mill in Blue River Township. The first blacksmith was Thomas Phillips who had his shop in 1822 on the Blue River. The first tavern was erected near Greenfield in 1826. The first store in the county was owned by Elijah Tyner also on the Blue River. The first road into the county was the Napoleon Trace which is probably 700 east. Hancock County was cut off from Madison County in 1828 and named for John Hancock President of the Convention was adopted the Declaration of Independence. During the first presidential election in 1828 101 people voted and the county population was probably 400 individuals. Hancock County's first exports were ginseng, vension, furs and tow linen. The Blue River is the largest stream in the county and it was a good mill stream for the pioneers. The three original townships of the county were Blue River, Brandywine, and Sugar Creek which were organized in 1828.

Enough. I have told you everything that I know and some things I don't. Talk to me.

2015-09-19

By
Joe Skvarenina

Nicole Kobrowski is researching a couple of books on orphan homes, county homes and private sanitariums in Indiana. She need information about Hancock County sites. If you can help provide the information she can be reached at nicl@inseenpress.com. The Indiana Postal History Society now has available a postal history of all Indiana counties. Included in this volume is a listing of all post offices that ever existed with postmasters and a history of everything to do about mail. For more information contact Art Hadley, Indiana Postal History Society, Hope Indiana 47246. The Greenfield Office was built at it's current site and the cornerstone was laid in 1931 by Congressman William Doc Larabee from New Palestine and Ora Myers was the postmaster. Prior to that date the post office was at the Arcade Building which proceeded the Ricks Theater. The postmaster position was a political football for a number of years.

Nancy Finster lives in Larry Fox's old house and is looking for information on it's history. The house located at 203 Wood Street and was built by Winfield Scott Fries probably in 1908 during the gas boom era. He was the owner of the Hancock Mills and elevator and had served four terms as county surveyor. he was a Methodist Episcopal Church member and in his younger years a school teacher. He also belonged to various Masonic groups. He was never married and was 59 years old when he died. Does anyone have information about this property?

I am currently filming a series of local history programs with Ninestar Connect. The series is called "Stepping back in Time" The first one appeared Saturday August 15. You Ninestar folks stayed tuned for more episodes. If you have something you would liked aired please contact me. We are looking for program ideas in the east central area.

I found this painting here in Greenfield in a garage. It seems the owner was charged with the responsibility of cleaning out Howard Sam's Company it was closed and he was given the portrait. I couldn't believe it. There was no artist signature. Subsequently a local collector purchased the painting with plans to restore it. Hopefully more information will come forward on the find.

Enough. I have told you everything that I know and some things I don't. Talk to me.

2015-09-12

By Joe Skvarenina

Congrats to the New Palestine Planning Commission for faulting the development of the Delany Cemetery. A few years ago I was walking around at the site and I discovered a stone buried in the grass so who knows what other burials are there. Delany Cemetery is a historic African American site and one of the few in Hancock County.

In 1860 when John Delany sold the farm to William Nichols he was smart enough to reserve a .25 acre grave yard with a 5 foot pathway to the grave yard from the State highway, now US 52. Over the years the cemetery was neglected until Aid Association for Lutherans with Zion Lutheran Church did a project to identify and clean all the cemeteries in Sugar Creek Township. The Township Trustee erected a fence to protect the visible grave markers. The first fence was replaced by an Eagle Scout project and the Township Trustee provided the fencing material.

The land was farmed by Marguerite Lantz, a descendant of William Nichols, until her death when the estate though the Greenfield Banking Company sold the land in 1981. The 1981 deed excepts the .25 acre grave yard with the 5 foot pathway and thus was never conveyed to others.

John Delany operated a tavern and store along the Brookville Treaty Road one mile west of New Palestine many years before the Civil War. The house still exists and is the Jim and Phyllis Arthur home. Mrs. Delany was a good cook and was known many miles along the old state pike...When John was asked what percent profit he made he was reported as saying he was not a scholar and knew nothing about percent; but when he bought goods for one dollar and sold them for two, he didn't think he lost anything. The 1850 census records list the Delany's as mulatto which in today's world is a African American. Sarah and John Delany were also recorded in the census as property owners with \$7,700 worth of real estate which would have been a lot of moneyback in the good old days. Another cemetery which I have some concern about is the pioneer McNamee Cemetery also in Sugar Creek Township. This could also be called the Hudson cemetery since a man named Hudson set off the original plot. It was acquired by the McNamee family in 1887. There are only four graves at this site.

I know that life goes on and land owners change and development happens but you can always tell the nature of a society by how it treats the dead. I believe it behooves us all to respect pioneer burying grounds with respect and dignity.

Enough. I have told you everything that I know and some things I don't. Talk to me.

2015-09-05

By Joe Skvarenina

In July Green Township had its community day. Yes, there is a community in Green Township and it is centered around the Fire Station. Green Township is relatively new and it was added to the county in 1853. One of the infamous murders occurring in Green Township was in 1878, little Anaretta Cass and her Aunt Sarah Wilson. In 1959 after the Indiana School Reorganization Act passed Green Township merged with Center Township Schools. Center Township voted for the merger with Green, the out numbered Green Township Citizens voted against by five to one.

Green Township was named after John Green one of the first settlers in the area. Eden is the major community in the township. It was first called Lewisburg. It was laid out in 1835. Milner's Corner was another town on the Brown Township line which is no longer there. Milner's Corner even had a post office at one time. Go there today and you won't find anything. Charleston is another community which was laid out and but never developed. The Barnard Family Orchestra was from the community and entertained at many Chautauqua's. The Barnard Sorghum Factory was a thriving business and produced 1200 gallons of Sorghum a day. Does anyone know the location of the factory?

There were two churches in the Township. Eden Methodist and Milner's corner E.U.B. which is now a Methodist Church called probably Sugar Creek Methodist, If fact that is the only thing left in Milner's Corner. Green Township was effected by glacier's. Thanks to Ron Stamps for making me aware of community days.

Do you remember the old Texaco Station of State Road Nine and 234?

I was invited to attend Fortville Sesquicentennial Days by Rebecca Crow and Ruth Dulby. On July 5 they had a very interesting historical exhibit in the basement of the Fortville Methodist Church. Ruth much corner and be prepared to listen. The oldest church in Vernon Township in Mt. Carmel Primitive Baptist Church south of Fortville. Also did you know St. Thomas Catholic Church founded in 1869 named was changed from St. John after it was founded. Also in McCordsville, , 1905, Luther Frost and a group of men build a factory were the " Leader Auto" was manufactured. It ceased operation in 1907. Is the factory building still there?

Enough. I have told you every thing I know and some things I don't. Talk to me.

2015-08-29

By Joe Skvarenina

The Hancock County community has been rife with stories about the KKK. I am normally don't want to give them any publicity but I do believe that by and large that group is past history itself in Hancock County.

Paul McNeil from the Library writes," A librarian from IPL called me asking about the link between the New Palestine Dragons and the KKK. I've heard the rumors but did not know of any proof that existed on the subject. As far as I know it's all hearsay/coincidence.

I had heard that the original owner of the land was big in the Klan and donated it for the building of the school. Hence the mascot name. I checked the 1906 atlas that predates the 1919 NP High School and the plot says School No. 4. So it seems the school was already established here but maybe not the total land.

The first mention of the Dragons in the newspaper that I could find was in the early 1930s."

I do believe that the story about New Palestine Dragons is urban legend and nothing more. I have looked and find no evidence to the contrary. Occasionally student will confront with this myth and it is simple not true.

In 1923 Rev V.W. Blair, a former pastor, of the Greenfield Christian Church addresses a large crowd n the courthouse lawn on the mission of thee Klan. The report said, " From the number of cards turned in the organizer, it is evident we are soon to have a Klan in your midst, who will no doubt display a fiery cross in our midst." Also in 1923 the Klan staged a demonstration in Greenfield. By 8P.M.a crowd of 20,000 persons gathered on Main Street to watch the parade. Several hundred Klansmen from Indianapolis, Knightstown, New Castle, Anderson, Franklin, Muncie, Elwood, and others. A rally was held at the Fairgrounds to witness the ceremonies which were secret. The crowds were reported orderly. It was said that 6040 cars left the Fairgrounds that evening.

In 1925 a reveal was held at the Greenfield Tabernacle on North Street and 50 members of the Klan attended the Tuesday service and left a \$75 donation and a note of Congratulations Rev. E.J. Bulgin who conducted the revival. AS the revival ended, a parade was staged by hundreds of persons carrying Bibles and American flags and led by the Presbyterian Church band. I do believe that the Greenfield Tabernacle is still in existence on North Street.

In 1928 Indiana Attorney General revoked the permit for the Klan to operate in Indiana saying that the Klan had concealed its true purpose when applying for the permit.

In 1965 four men were arrested for distributing Klan literature around the courthouse.

Enough I have told you all that I know and some things I don't. Talk to me.

2015-08-15

By Joe Skvarenina

Pate Jeffersonon writes. "Thanks for the history of Mt Comfort . We've lived on 500 N since '74 and have never really thought of Mt Comfort as more than a crossroad. Since I retired a few years ago my brain has switched gears a bit and I get weird ideas that wake me up at night and one morning last year I woke up at 2AM with the thought of doing a history on Buck Creek Township so the wife and I rode around a little and took a few pictures and I put together a short video. Didn't want to bore people.. You may smile or throw up when you watch it, depends on your sense of humor.Thanks again for the history,

<http://youtu.be/yF6tBMe4Pa>." Thanks for the video Pete. I am sure our readers will enjoy it.

Buck Creek Township took its name from the stream that runs through it. Some say that many bucks roamed it banks. Buck Creek Township was first settled 1822. Buck Creek Township was struck off from Sugar Creek Township in 1831 and added to non existent Union and Jones Townships. In 1853 Buck Creek Township assumed its present size. the first land entry was made in 1822 by George Worthington. The first grist mill powered by water began operating in 1854 on Buck Creek near Mt. Comfort. A steam corn cracker began operating in 1860. Later saw mills began serving the community. Dr. James Hervey father of the State Board of Health was from old Mt. Comfort. Dr. Abraham Shortridge second president of Purdue University was from Mt. Comfort.

The graveyards in the Township have interesting histories also. The Cochard grave yard tells the story of emigrants going wets who camped at the site as they crossed the area. Two little daughters of the family became ill and died. The family buried them under a cedar tree and their names are unknown. David and Sophie Offenbacker and family build a cabin on the ridge in the northwestern section of the township. Their infant son died and they buried him under a maple tree with a sandstone marker. The stone disappeared and nothing remains of the Offenbacker graveyard.

Enough. I have told you all that I know and some things I don't. Talk to me.

2015-08-08

Paul McNeil from the Hancock County Public Library tells us that >'11 sites exist on the National Register of Historic Places for Hancock County
<http://www.nationalregisterofhistoricplaces.com/IN/Hancock/state.html>

SHAARD - Indiana State Historic Architectural and Archaeological Research Database – Log in as Guest. This has more in-depth information on each property, eg: original assessments, grade, photographs.
<https://secure.in.gov/apps/dnr/shaard/welcome.html>

Then of course the Hancock County Interim Report which was the basis of the National Register in Hancock County to my knowledge.
<http://indiamond6.ulib.iupui.edu/cdm/ref/collection/IHSSI/id/18376>." This should be helpful for those doing historical research. Thanks Paul

In June 1993 I had the opportunity to interview John Ward Walker of Greenfield. John is no longer with us but he told some very interesting stories of his family and Greenfield. His great grandfather J Ward Walker came to Greenfield in 1858 and opened a general store in which he conducted business to his death in 1904. Up to 1864, the mercantile business was conducted under the name of G.H. & J Ward Walker; from 1864 to 1868 the firm's name was G.H. & J. Ward Walker; from 1868 to 1871 it was called Walker & Edwards: Dr. D.M. Edwards having been admitted to the partnership. In 1871 he helped with Nelson Bradley to organize the Greenfield Banking Company, Nelson Bradley was the president and J. Ward Walker was the cashier. Mr. Walker stayed with the Bank until 1876 having sold out the store in the meantime. In the later years he started furnishing and clothing store under the firm name of J. Ward Walker & Company.

In 1882, he located his business in the Randall block, remaining there until 1892 when he occupied nearly all of the Dudding Moore block. In September of 1896 he moved to the Masonic Building where he remained. This business was very successful and carried stock worth 40 or 50 thousand dollars which was a lot in this days. He employed 16 to 20 employees. He was the leading merchant in the county. Annual sales were 80-85 thousand which would five to six million today. Walker's occupied the first and basement floor of the Masonic Building. As you went in the front door there was a huge staircase to the basement. It is now covered up but still there, All business was conducted carrier through baskets which took cash upstairs to the office. When Walker's went out of business these baskets went to Stout's Shoe Company in Indianapolis being used today. Some say that the baskets still have nameplate which reads J. Ward Walker.

Go downtown in Greenfield to look at some on the names of the buildings you will find the locations. Of course the masonic Building is the Creative Arts Center also know as the Walker block. By the way, John's mother Marjorie Walker was the first president of the Hancock County Historical Society.

Enough. I have told you everything I know and some things. I don't talk to me.

2015-08-01

By Joe Skvarenina

Kim Keiser writes, " I am the 2nd great-granddaughter of Eli Brown, who was born in Hancock County, IN. He did 3 terms of service in the Civil War, the longest being in Company E, 26th Regiment of the Indiana Volunteers. I have his file records from the National Archives and also have the disability home record". Eli was a single farmer when he enlisted. He died and is buried in Mooresville in 1903

I know you do some Civil War and Hancock County research and wanted to introduce myself. I think he registered in Morgan County, IN, which may invalidate his Hancock County connection, which was his place of birth as it is listed on his Civil War records so I wanted to introduce myself and see if you were interested in any of my findings. He was a Quaker and he got in trouble with the church later on for bearing arms. I am a member of the Daughters of Union Veterans of the Civil War and have many uncles who served, but just this one grandfather that was able to be proven."

Kim fourth great grandfather settled in Hancock county from Kentucky. His name was Elisha Whorton or Wharton. He was born in 1817 and died in Nashville in 1864.

Sue Baker wrote a book on Hancock County Civil War veterans. Do any of you have any information on these two?

According to Binford's History of Hancock County 209 of our residents died in the Civil War. Our community was pro-union. Many Hancock County residents served in Company G of the Eight Regiment. The roster included Rueben Riley and Lee O. Harris. On starting for the front the company was presented with a large flag made by the Greenfield ladies. The work on the flag was done at the Thayer home on Main and Pennsylvania. The site is the empty gas station beside the Ricks Theater.

Hancock County had one General who claimed the community. Oliver Gooding who distinguished himself in the 1864 Red River Campaign considered Greenfield his home. He was appointed Colonel of the Massachusetts regiment and rose to the rank of Brigadier-General. He returned to Greenfield to practice law for a period of time. He eventually went to Missouri and became Attorney General. He is the author of the anthem "America".

Enough. I have told you everything that I know and some things I don't. Talk to me.

2015-07-25

By Joe Skvarenina

Donna Dulek writes" My granddaughter is doing a paper for her 5th grade class on the Columbia Hotel. Could you provide any information or advise where we might get information on the hotel?" On the north side of Route 40 near the Butler soup kitchen there is an empty parking lot that was the location of the old Columbia motel. For many years it was the site of many conventions and important meetings in the community. The Columbia was built in 1895 and it was demolished in 1960. In 1922 a three-gallon still and other items were found in the basemen for making bootleg liquor by Federal officers. The proprietor David Hall was fined \$175 plus court costs. That same year the furnishing of the Columbia were sold at tax sale for \$2500 the amount of the tax debt.

When originally built it had a turret, balconies, and a third floor ballroom. The restaurant was famous for its friend chicken and could feed a large group. It also had a main stair case which was open and impressive to the lobby. It had an open fireplace the lobby. In the 50's the building struggled for survival. The managers used to dump the ashes from the coal furnace in the basement which soon filled up. It was vacant for several years. Eventually no one knew what to do about the ashes or the building and it was torn down.

In March my wife's cousin Jim Holder passed away. Jim was a 1961 graduate of Mt. Comfort High School which would have been at the site of the current Mount Comfort Grade School. The Old Mt. Comfort High School was built in 1917 in Buck Creek Township. In 1923 the County Auditor George O'Dunn took the basketball team to the Indidpols theater for winning the sectionals. In 1906 Buck Creek Township had seven schools with six being grade schools. All the grade schools were one room. A combined high school and grade school located in Mt. Comfort had four teachers. I believe that was the gary brick building that now serves as a residence. If you go into the Mt. Comfort grade school an old band uniform is on display My condolences to the Holder family.

The community of Mt. Comfort was platted in the 1840's. In 1845 a memorable Fourth of July celebration was held near Mt. Comfort and a flag was made by Mother Eastes's white linen sheets and a large barbecue hit was dug with many delegates coming from all over the county.

Enough. I have told you everything that I know and some things I don't talk to me.

2015-07-18

By Joe Skvarenina

Periodically we have had inquiries about the McCordsville Dog Track. Ronn Berry comes to our rescue, He says. " The track was built in the late 1930's for dog racing but the owners were never able to get a gambling permit because some say of mob connections. It never opened for that reason." Later midget racing became a big deal and it was bought by Armscamp Speedway. One of the owners was named Scampleton and the track was called Raceland. It was asphalt. It cost 85 cents for general admission and 60 cents for the grandstand. The McCordsville Sport Park was eventually built on the location. As late as 1966 you could still see outlines on the track on satellite photos. There was a drive-in theater built on the site after the track closed in 1949. There also was a speedway in Fortville called the Outlaw Speedway off of 36 and 67. It was torn down in 1986. It was a dirt track. There was also a track for midgets next to Riley park. Myron Fohr in a Marche family car raced midget on this track in the 1940's . Mr. Fohr was a big time midget racer from Wisconsin. The Marche family from Milwaukee were big players in auto racing in the 1940's and promoted many racers at the Wisconsin State Fair.

I went to visit the just opened New Palestine Museum in the old Phares building the other day. The Phares building used to be the old library the Legion Headquarters, post office, and the Phares store. If you get time go take a look. The driving force of the operation is Becky Gaines the former publisher of the New Palestine Press. Other papers in New Palestine were the New Palestine Star, the New Palestine Courier, the New Palestine News with the Press starting circa 1943. If your doing some research there are copies of later papers in the museum.

Enough. I have told you everything that I know and some things I don't. Talk to me.

2015-07-11

By
Joe Skvarenina

Vennus Campbell indicates the current address of the temporary Greenfield Police Station was 23 West South Street. It was listed wrong in the story.

Charlie Gildwell former Chief of the Greenfield Police provides us with an updated history of the department and corrects the existing one. " The Greenfield Police Department was established in 1850 when Greenfield Was incorporated with a town Marshall system and the first serving Marshall was indeed N.P. Howard who was appointed because the elected Town Marshall wouldn't serve after being elected. The first Greenfield Police Chief was John Francis Mulvihill who was appointed in 1926. He later became a Justice of the Peace. The Greenfield Police Department also was responsible for animal control as stated in your column until approximately 1970. Officers carried a snare in the trunk of their vehicles, the dog pound was located in an old barn on what is now Davis Road just west of the old Greenfield open Dump which is where the current F.O.P. Lodge. Animals which were not claimed were destroyed once a week. There was also a red light on top of a telephone pole on the North East corner of State and Main with a call box also located on the pole. A police car would be parked at the South East corner of State and Main and when the red light came on they would go to the call box and call in. The Greenfield Police Department has had four homes the first being in the Hancock County Court House, the Police department moved to the newly constructed City Hall in 1956 and occupied the Northeast corner of City Hall, the Police Department then moved to 23 West South Street in 1963. In 1977 the Police Department moved to its current location at 116 South State Street. The article also states it moved to 23 West South St."

Thanks Charlie. He is the historian of the Greenfield Police Department. Enough I have told you everything I know and some things I don't. Talk to me.

Special Column

By Joe Skvarenina

James Forcum from Beavercreek Ohio writes, "I was born and raised in Greenfield, Indiana and read the *"Daily Reporter"* every day. My parents lived there 47 years, until their respective deaths, and my brother, John Forcum, still lives there today.

As you know, 14 Apr 2015 is rapidly approaching. This will be the 150th anniversary of the assassination of President Abraham Lincoln. It wasn't until last Friday that I learned about the connection between the **Lincoln Funeral Train and Greenfield**" though an article in National Geographic

Yes, the the Lincoln Train did pass through Greenfield and Charlottesville with both passings being recorded in the Richman History of Hancock County. After elaborate ceremonies were held in Washington D.C. the Lincoln Funeral Train departed the nation's capital on April 21, 1865 and finally arrived in Springfield on May 3, 1865 . The actual funeral was held in Springfield on May 4. The train had traveled through seven states ,180 cities and had gone 1654 miles in some cases tracing Lincoln's original inaugural route. It passed through Greenfield on April 30, 1865 at the early morning hour of 5:55 A.M. It was traveling 20 miles per hour for people to have the opportunity to view the casket.

On April 30 the Lincoln Funeral Train entered Richmond Indiana at 3 A.M. and stopped to pick up Governor Oliver P. Morton and other state dignitaries. It was estimated that 12,000 to 15,000 people were at the Richmond station and church bells all over the city rang to pay homage to the deceased president. At 3:41 A.M. the train arrived in Centerville and went on to Germantown, Cambridge City and Knightstown. At 4:27 A.M. it arrived at Dublin where the entire community came out to show their respects. From there the train entered Hancock County journeyed to Charlottesville where many African American gathered at the tracks to grieve their slain leader.

The remains of President Lincoln passed through Greenfield on April 30, 1865 at 5:55 A.M. on a dismal cold day. Many citizens from all parts of Hancock County were at the depot hoping to catch a glimpse of the coffin in which the martyred President lay. Prior to its arrival a young veteran had read Lincoln's Second Inaugural address. But the train didn't stop so all people noticed was the railroad cars draped in black crepe looking very sombre. People couldn't see the casket because of the train's small windows ***but it didn't matter since everyone was weeping at this point.***

Lincoln was not always that popular in Hancock County. During his first presidential race Stephen Douglas carried Hancock County . In the 1864 presidential election Lincoln did carry Hancock County under Union Party banner. According to the Binford History of Hancock County 209 residents died in the Civil War. Hancock County had its share of Union brothers, cousins, and nephews spilling blood against their Confederate counterparts. But in the end when the fall of Richmond Virginia and the surrender of Robert E. Lee was announced an

issue of the "Hancock County Democrat" gave the following description... "Bells were ringing, bonfires were built, powder was fully used and all the business of the day was suspended for the day."

Yes, on April 30, 1865 Lincoln really was in Hancock County!

Enough. That is all I know and some things I don't. Talk to me.

2015-06-13

By Joe Skvarenina

Dee and Jeanette Wickard write, " I am on the Ag Board for Hancock County. We are wanting to get some information on the fairgrounds when it was at the location where the hospital is now. Dates it was started and when it was moved to the present place on Apple St. If there is any pictured of the location, that would be wonderful. Also, do you know if there was a fairgrounds before it was at the Hospital location? Please email me anything you have. This information will be at a booth that will be set up in the Commercial Building at the time of the fair. We will be showing information of the present location and the future location on US 40. Your help would truly be appreciated."

The county's first agricultural society was organized June, 1835 at the Courthouse. The first county fair was held in 1856 at the east end of the town north of the National Road probably near the current fairgrounds site. According to the Richman History the first agricultural association of which we have any records was organized in 1856 for the purpose of holding county fairs. In 1857 the Fair was held on the south side of the railroad , east of Brandywine Creek, on land belonging to Samuel Milroy. A fire destroyed the floral hall in 1871. The hall was not rebuilt. The last fair was held at this site in 1879 at this location. Boyd's Grove or the hospital property, north of Greenfield was chosen on December 21, 1885 as the fairgrounds. I find it difficult to go beyond this point.

I hope this helps. Enough. I have told you everything that I know and some things I don't. Talk to me.

2015-06-05

By Joe Skvarenina

Founder's Day in Shirley are just around the corner, August 14,15, 1nd 16. So please be sure to mark your calendar.

One interesting site in Shirley is the Octagon House. Have you ever seen one. There are only five Octagon Houses standing in Indiana. The Reeves Octagon House had never been altered except for the front porch. This house was originally located between Wilkinson and Willow Branch. It was moved to its current location in town on Railroad Street in 1997.

The Octagon housed replaced the Reeve's log cabin on the farm. The Reeves family had originally planted two trees on each side of the gate of the farm one for the man and one for the women. These were called wedding trees. When Jane Ross Reeves found the plans for an Octagon House in a magazine she liked the house so much she just had to build one. The cost of construction \$2300. It was built be a contracting company in Fortville. When the house was completed it was paid for in full by money that Jane Ross Reeves saved in a shoe box. The house has 14 rooms and each room has a closet. There are four large rooms and four small rooms on each floor. The house has four chimneys. One chimney serves four rooms, two rooms and two rooms down.

The Octagon house is operated by the Indiana octagon House Foundation. Their web site is WWW.IndianaOctagonHouse.com. Go see it but check to be sure it is open. It will be opened on Founders Day.

Enough. I have told you all that I know and some things I don't. Talk to me.

2015-05-30

By Joe Skvarenina

Every time I drive through Charlottesville and Look at the old school I think about the memories contained in those four walls. I only wish it was in better condition. The cornerstone of that building was laid on the building on August 23, 1936. A previous building at the site burned on December 23, 1935.

The earliest schools of Jackson Township were located in the southwest portion of the township near Stringtown.. These were private schools. The first public school in the Township was at Leamon Corner known as District 4. The building at Leamons Corner was 18x24 feet and had a large fireplace at the end of the building, large chimney made of stick and clay. Greased paper over the place where a log was cut out for a window. The roof was split shingled from blocks of wood held on by a pole over them. This was 1830 and no nails were available. The floors were usually puncheon floors. These were split log with the flat side up. Cracks between the floor boards were daubed with clay to keep out the cold. Seats were cut from slabs of wood and rubbed as smooth as possible. Wooden legs were bored into the seats. Water came from a nearby stream and all the students drank from the same bucket. All the equipment which was needed by the teacher included a boot jack and some switches to keep the students in line. Holes and pins in the wall served as hat and coat racks. The second building of this kind was erected on the east bank of Six Mile Creek north of Charlottesville on a hill known as Badger Hill. This makes the school of today look really good

Enough. I have told you everything that I know and some things I don't. Talk to me.

2015-05-23

Joe Skvarenina

Donna Steele writes," I am searching for the eleven registered historical sites in the county and I can't find a comprehensive list. Do you have one available?"

Donna, I don't know what you mean by registered historical sites? But here are some things that might fit the bill. During the Bicentennial the Hancock County Historical Society placed markers throughout the community. There were nine of them. One was located in Blue River Township and designated the location of the first store in Hancock County which was Elijah Tyner's store, another was at Jonathan Evans store and Post Office in New Palestine, one was located at the site of the Black Swamp in Center Township,. Another was in Brandywine at Finley, one in Vernon at Phoebe Forts Corner, one in Buck Creek at Hancock County's first Fourth of July picnic, Green Township and the Fiqua Cabin site, Jackson Township and the Cleveland Inn, and Brown Township at the Warrington Flour mill site. Also Little Orphant Annie's Grave is marked in the Philadelphia Cemetery and the Hancock County Seminary (school) is marked on Pennsylvania Street in Greenfield. Most of the signs are still up and they should easily be recognized.

In addition there are some great museums in the county. The Shirley Historical Society has the Railroad Depot, the Doctor's Office, Greenfield has the Riley Boyhood home and the Hancock County Historical Museum and Log Jail. So I do believe that one could study Indiana History right here in Hancock County.

In the spring of 1828 the southern part of Madison County was organized as a new county and was named after John Hancock. On April 11, 1828 Greenfield was designated as the county seat. The community was built in the center of the county on donated land. Behind the fourth Courthouse, the fourth, there is a stone in the sidewalk on southeast side in the sidewalk. Pioneer surveyors began measuring off the lots from this stone.

Enough. I have told you everything that I know and some things I don't. Talk to me.

2015-05-16

By Joe Skvarenina

Mike Vandembark is looking for an 1866 Platt Map of Hancock County. Does anyone have such a map? Mike also claims Charlie Fox as his uncle.

Charles Elmer Fox was born June 6, 1913 in a log cabin on Ohio's Erie Canal, one half mile west of the Big Wabash in Vigo County. Mr. Fox was a naturalist, a forager and in an earlier life a hobo who lived off the bounty of the land, traveling the railroad. He was the oldest of nine children and claimed to be a mixture of Irish, Scotch, Welch, German, French, and Delaware Indian descent. He was married, had five children and lived on the south side of Charlottesville. For many years he wrote a column for the Daily Reporter. Later he wrote two books, one which was published by the University of Oklahoma Press about life on the road. He also wrote a book entitled, "Weeds and Other Good Things to eat." Both of these books appear occasionally and are good reads. Fox was a Hancock county original.

Jerry Duke and members of the Shirley Historical Society are to work on Founders' Day. The dates are August 14, 15, and 16th. A parade will be held on Saturday and I am sure that the group is interested in more floats or possible additional entertainment. If you are interested contact Jerry Duke at dkkustomz@myninestar.net.

Some time ago I spent a day with Joe McDonald from Blue River Township exploring the township and I have lost contact. If you know Joe please have him email me.

Enough. I have you everything that I know and some things I don't. Talk to me.

2015-05-08

By Joe Skvarenina

Barbara Johnson writes, "I am a Hancock County resident and a graduate student at Ball State. This semester, in a educational history doctoral seminar, we are investigating the education of African American students in Indiana rural settlements in the last half of the 1800s. We're focusing on east-central Indiana, and have taken as a starting point the early rural Black settlements documented by the Indiana Historical Society. There is one such small settlement mentioned located in Sugar Creek Township of Hancock County. Are you aware of any documents that concern this settlement and especially the education of any children there? Or do you know of anyone else to whom I could speak about this topic?"

Barb I don't believe that there was a a black school in Sugar Creek Township. But African American did live in the township.

According to the Richman history, John Delaney operated a tavern along the Brookville State Road, Route. 52, many years before the Civil War at the site of the William Nicholas homestead about one mile west of New Palestine. This is the current home of Jim and Phyllis Arthur. Four room of the current house is the original tavern. John Delaney and family were African Americans.

It is said the Mrs. Delaney was known as a good cook for many miles along the old state road. Also Amos Dickerson, John Delaney, and Jonathan Evans opened a small grocery along Brookville Road in 1831, 1833, and 1838 respectively. The Delaney's owned the property until 1860. The Delaney Cemetery is next door and can be seen form US 52.

Mr. Delaney sold his goods in the store at a good profit. When asked what percentage he made, he replied that he was not a scholar and he knew nothing about percent; but when he bought goods for a \$1.00 and sold them for \$2.00, he didn't think he lost anything.

Enough. I have told you everything that I know and some things I don't. Talk to me.

2015-05-02

By Joe Skvarenina

I drive the National Road occasionally and I noticed this two story log cabin in Pershing or East Germantown on the north side of the road. it must have been covered up by a house for several years. It is huge and it is for sale. The owner says it dates to 1828. He knows nothing else about it. To me the building ins really impressive.

I know there are several houses like this in Hancock County, the Shambles being one of them. Do you know of any hidden or visible cabins in Hancock County? Let me know.

I am working on a history of the Nameless Creek Youth Camp and Tubby Toms. Mr Lowell "Tubby Toms a naturalist wrote a column for the Indianapolis News for a period of forty years. He was honored and named Indiana Newspaper man of the year by the Indianapolis Press Club and a Sycamore of the Wabash by Governor Harold Handley. Toms and his wife Adeline originally leased 20 acres of land for Nameless Creek Youth Camp in Blue River Township. In 1971 the Estate of Lowell Toms donated 30 acres to the Camp. In April 1951 Old Tom Williams then President of Kiwanis Club presented a plan to Kiwanis to develop the recreation center leased from Mr. Toms. At that time Williams offered several buildings to the Camp to be cleared by the Pure Oil Company. The list of improvements presented to Kiwanis included construction of a drive way and digging of a well. In 1956 the electricity was installed and in 1957 the original Mess Hall and kitchen were added. In 1962 a shelter wired for lights was built. In 1990 the Construct Tech Department of Greenfield High School built three new cabins with money donated by Sertoma. Currently Jerry Bell and the crew at Setoma has greatly improved the facility

What do you know about Lowell "Tubby" Toms and Nameless Creek. Toms was also an active supporter of Westland and Blue River Township. Let me know.

Tubby would tell the story, " I once caught a string of fish, cut a twig from a cottonwood tree stuck in the ground and there hung my string of fish. I roamed an a turtle ate my fish but that twig sprouted and today is 80 foot tree and stands there near Carthage."

Enough. I have told you all that I know and some things I don't. Talk to me.

2015-04-25

By Joe Skvarenina

Paul McNeil from the Greenfield Library tells us that the Hancock County Democrat (1862-1956) and the Daily Reporter (1908-1963) has been uploaded. You can have free access to Inspire by going to <http://blog.newspapers.library.IN.gov/access/inspire>. This is part of the Digital Historic Newspapers program. For you genealogists this should be useful. Barnes Sewer and Septic in Winchester just recently hosted its 5th Annual "Crank In" It seems that they have a circular sock knitting machine which as a result of WW I became popular when the army needed a million socks. It was invented in 1919. Do you like Riley Park? I walk down sometimes just to enjoy the quiet. In 1921, the Greenfield City Council ordered the Brandywine be surveyed with the idea of establishing around the Old Swimmin Hole. In 1925 the Park was dedicated on Riley's birthday. During that day in 1925 three thousand children marched with flowers and flags. There were many floats and speakers. East Greenfield School won the prize of a new flag for 100 per cent attendance. According to local newspapers the Greenfield Kiwanis was responsible for organizing the event. By the summer of 1929 on one Sunday 500 people enjoyed the Park. Also in 1929 3 truckloads of Iris bulbs were donated and planted by the Flower Growers Association. On July 1, 1930 a pool was dedicated in Riley Park down near the current playground and 57 people used the pool the first day. In 1931 the Greenfield Federation of Women's dedicated the well house which is still in existence. The spring it covered is known as Irving Spring after an Afro American who lived in a cabin near the site. The gentleman's name was Irving Hunt and he was a friend of James Whitcomb Riley. In 1930 the City sold \$25,000 in bonds to improve James Whitcomb Riley Park. Enough. I have told you everything that I know and some things I don't. Talk to me.

2015-04-18

By Joe Skvarenina

 Ted Keller writes "Some time back you did a piece about old local Motels. This is a early Post Card of the Town and Country Motel that my parents owned, Bob and Maureen Keller. It was west Route 40 near kind,s One Stop. " If you drive over you can see all that remains. Ted for providing the post card!

I G Wheeler tells that James Wheeler is the oldest boy to deliver the Daily Reporter, not Niles White as claimed. Mr. Wheeler is 90 years young. Does anyone else want to claim the title?

Lucas Knotts wants to know if anyone is related to Bannon family might be in the Vernon Township area. The date is circa 1850. He is researching his family history.

Do you remember Roy Rogers? Boy I sure do. I remember watching the episodes on Saturday morning . Jane Waveland tells that his museum in Branson Missouri has been closed and all the artifacts have been sold. Those under 50 years old wouldn't have any recollection.

Terence Hanley from Athens Ohio writes , " My dad lives in Fountaintown, and when I'm home visiting with him, I sometimes read and always enjoy your local history column in the Daily Reporter...I'm sending a picture about the Moral High School class of 1931-1932. I hope the original class picture is still in existence." Yes it is. Doris Mohr Kaster some years wrote some years ago 'Moral Township School Memories, Shelby County 1923-1958' and she tells about the photos in this book. The pictures which hung in the hallways of old Moral retrieved from a closet at the Triton High school where they had been stored. The photos were presented to the Shelbyville Library and should be in the history room. Also an album of these pictures was made and kept in the school library as well as an album for Boggstown and Fairland.

The moral School is now gone. But Doris and others have kept the memory alive. The building was erected in 1923 and the property was sold in 1985 by Northwestern Consolidated School District. It was the first high school in Moral Township and before it was closed it served as Triton North Elementary.

In addition Doris has passed away. It was my pleasure to know her through her many volunteer activities. She was a great person.

Enough. I have told you everything that I know and some things I don't. Talk to me.

2015-04-04

By Joe Skvarenina

What do you know about City Services? In 1930 Greenfield Power and Light was begun in an old brick building on South Riley Avenue which I think it has been torn down. It generated its own power with three steam engines until 1949. In 1950 Power and Light it eased generating its own power and began purchasing it from Public Service Indiana. In 1983 Greenfield became of the Indiana Municipal Power Agency, a charter member. Also did you know until 1970 the Greenfield Police Department was responsible for animal control until a joint agreement was entered into with the county and Animal Control was established. The Greenfield Police Department was established in 1850 and N.P. Howard was the first Town Marshall. From the late 1930's until the 1950's the police department was located in the northwest corner of the Courthouse. A red light on the northeast corner of State and Main was the signal for cars to contact the department. Police cars in those days had no radio's. The Police department was later located in a house on West South Street before it moved into the newly constructed City Hall in 1956. It moved one more time to 23 West Street before the facility at 116 South State Street was built in 1997. Thanks to Pat Elmore for all these details. She knows all the details about city government.

Richard Ratliff the Henry County Historian provides us with the two old photos from Ken Myers family. According to Myers from Burleson Texas writes, "My wife, Cecelia Johnson Moore, is from the Knightstown. All her family is buried in the Knightstown including her grandfather in the photo. Mr. Edwin Johnson, her grandfather, is the man in the middle in overalls. As a young man he was a sulky trainer. His family had the stage stop in Charlottesville. The other photo is the Charlottesville Manufacturing Company and he is the man on the right and the other are related to him." Does anyone know the location of the Charlottesville Manufacturing Company? I would assume it would be the late 1890's

Enough. I have told you everything that I know and some things I don't. Talk to me.

2015-03-28

By Joe Skvarenina

Jake Gumberts provides us with more information on Race Tracks in Hancock County. According to Gumberts race track exited east of Stanley Chevrolet on State Route 67 in McCordsville.. A Soccer Field was been built on the site. The drive into the entrance of the Soccer Field was the driveway onto the race track. There is an old light pole in this area that has been there for years. Jake adds , " the track was called the dog track and I don't know why? In the late 1940's after WW II my dad use to take me there to watch midgets racing. As I remember it was a short flat asphalt tack. Two drivers I recall were Harry McQuinn and Len Duncan. For years it was grown up in weeds and people jumped trash on it. This should not be confused with the dirt bike track that was along 67. This was built in the later 1970's and close to the old Plantation Club." Do any of you remember the dog track?

Thanks Jake.

Good old Darrel Deck also reminds us not to forget the horse racing track in Shirley called Alfalfa Downs. Also the track in Warrington was the home of the Driving Park Association Race Track and people came from miles around to enjoy the racing. It was supposedly the best 1/2 mile track in the area for horse racing. This was about 1894-95 and there was a amphitheater constructed and five or six races were held at the track each summer. It was was built southwest of Knightstown Pendleton road and directly west of Warrington.

Cindy McKoy writes and wants to know about about the 57 car train derailment and the subsequent chemical spill. It happened September 23, 1956 and the south side of town had to be evacuated. The location as the tracks near the old American Legion. What do the rest of you remember about this event. Did it have any consequences for the north side of town?

Walter Worland knows much about Hancock County. He tells when Jimmy Allen was Mayor of Greenfield a new City Hall was constructed. The site was at the location of the current Veterans Park. A cornerstone was placed in the building on August 4, 1956 by the Grand Lodge. During the dedication Grand Lodge Officers and the Greenfield High School Band marched from, the Masonic building to the City Hall location. This old City Hall had been torn down and the cornerstone has not been opened yet. It is stored in the Street Department. When are we going to open it? Custom dictates 100 years but the building is gone.

Thanks Walter.

Enough I have told everything that I know and some things I don't. Talk to me.

2015-03-21

By Joe Skvarenina

Sherry Boram writes, "It was interesting to read your column in the Times Post sometime ago about the Ingalls Interurban crash. My mother, Florence Sherwood, regularly commuted to and from Fortville as a young woman, giving piano lessons to students in their homes. She was in the back of the second car when it crashed, and suffered only a nose bleed. Someone gave her a ride back to her home on Adams Street in Pendleton. It must have been very traumatic, though she didn't talk about it a lot, only admitting she was very lucky. So am I!!"

Thank you, Sherry.

If you go into Cumberland along the Old National Pike you will see a log cabin on the south side of the Road in front of Ron Saunder's business the Shambles. Some say the early structure was provision stop for stagecoaches and their passenger's. In 1831 the property was owned by Jane Eastes, her husband, and Uncle William Harvey. Now John Eastes, Jane's husband, is mentioned in the Hancock County History as operating a grocery store in Western Sugar Creek Township. Some believe that this log cabin is the store. John Eastes is listed as a prominent early settler and the first Trustee of Buck Creek Township. Early photos of the cabin do not exist. But clapboard siding was applied in the early 1900's. The house was again modernized in 1928. Sections of the home were moved when 40 was widened. In 1987 Gertrude Meier Combs sold of building and for several years it was used for a variety of functions. In 2001 a fire took the upper level of the old home and the cabin was discovered again. Ron restored the window in his Shambles Restoration Shop and the cabin was restored because of Ron's efforts.

There was a legend that passed down the Meier family that Henry Ward Beecher abolitionists preacher and brother to Harriet Beecher Stowe author of Uncle Tom's Cabin stayed at the site.

Steven lalioff a cabin expert refers to the construction of this cabin as Steeple Notch construction associated with Germanic cultures which began to fade in the middle 19th century. The lower notches were referred to Half Dovetail notches used in the 19th century by those of British background from North Carolina and Kentucky. The Eastes family originated from the Carolinas. Thanks to Ron for your efforts and this information.

2015-03-14

By Joe Skvarenina

Gene Gibbs is looking to find the location of the farm his father, Glenn , worked on in 1940's as a hired hand. It was the Jacob McDaniel property in Brown Township. His dad passed way when Gene was very young and would like to know more about his father. Paul McNeil the new reference librarian gives us a real clue by telling us that he recently scanned a 1906 Atlas of Hancock County. According to McNeil, "I think I may have located the farm's location or at least a general location. On page 5 of the 1906 atlas you'll find Brown Township. On plot 10 & plot 15 you'll find land belonging to Jacob A McDaniel. I have not checked to see if McDaniel owned any more properties in the surrounding area, I just saw the two at a glance." Thanks, Paul.

George Randall was a leading citizen of Hancock County. He was into leather and real estate and if you go downtown you will see the Randall Building at the NE corner of State and Main. His house was at 110 Grant Street and was built in 1869 and was the sole house on the 199 block until 1887. In addition I have been told that the old building at 235 Depot Street was at one time a chair factory but I know as the Old Blue Goose Tavern. Does anyone know the history of this building?

In searching sites Wikipedia provides us with some interesting facts about the Greenfield census. In 1900 the population of Greenfield was 4,489 and dropped to 4,188 in 1930. In 1940 the population was 4,821 and went up to 6,159 in 1950. In 1970 the population was 9,986 climbing to 11,657 in 1990. In 2000 the population went to 14,600 to 20,602, 2010. I wonder what it is today?

Did you know that Kyle Gibson 22nd over pick in the 2009 Major League Baseball Draft to the Minnesota Twins was from Greenfield?

Richard Ratliff the Henry County Historian provides with the announcement that 50-Year members, 43 in number, of the Spiceland Friends Church were honored at the congregation's 190th Anniversary. This is an old historic congregation and founded around 1824 or so has a major historic presence in western Henry County.

Mrs. Engleking stopped by to see me at Walgreens the other day. She was curious and wondered why Nameless Creek's name was changed. The Binford History of Hancock County was it was originally called Straight Creek. I really don't know do you? nameless Creek in Jackson Township furnished water power for several mills at an early date. The oldest being in 1827 established by John Fort and stood about one mile north of Charlottesville.

Enough. I have told all that I know and some things I don't. Talk to me.

2015-03-07

By Joe Skvarenina

Rick Edwards stopped by the other day with some old December 1941 Indianapolis Star newspapers. He found them in Amy Kuhn's old house on 300 North which he is rehabbing. Several people have found newspapers in the wall and floors of old homes. Folks back in the good old days didn't waste anything and would use old newspapers for insulation. Amy Kuhn's house has probably been rehabbed several times over the years because it seems to be an old log cabin. I would like to identify all the old log buildings still in existence in Hancock County. Do you know of any?

The year 1941 was a monumental for Americans. For one thing, it was the state's 125th year anniversary of admission to the Union. The Shrine and the B'Nai B'Rith pledged full support to the defense council units and the American Red Cross. Also the last bucket of concrete was tipped into the Grand Coulee Dam. Greenfield Mayor Ora Meyers died at 67 years of age, He served as both the Mayor and the Postmaster of the City of Greenfield. He was active in the republican party and the Christian Church. The Nazis flee Russia in an Napoleon' Retreat during 1941 was another headline along with Pearl Harbor. In 1941 men's overcoat sold for \$17.95, women's blouses for \$2.00, 12 lbs. of oranges for 50 cents and women's fur coats for \$69.50

In Greenfield in 1941 60% of the homes had electricity, Hancock County was out of debt with the last bonds of the Memorial Building being retired, Will Vawter an illustrator of Riley books and one of the founders of the Brown County Art Colony died at the age of 69. He was buried in the Greenfield. He made his first drawings for the Hancock County Democrat newspaper. In 1941 Stokley Packing Company bought out Greenfield Packing Company locations in Fortville, Mt. Comfort, and New Palestine for \$17,000. Maxwell Lions won the sectional tournament and would go on to Anderson. The Greenfield Boys Club Glee Club came in second in a national contest judged by Kate Smith and Guy Lombardo. Three hundred and fifty other Cubs participated in the event.

Enough. I have told you everything that I know and some things I don't. Talk to me.

2015-02-28

By Joe Skvarenina

I have doing veterans video interviews in cooperation with the Library for the Veterans History Project. The Veterans History Project is a program of the Library of Congress. The program was created with the unanimous support of the United State Congress in 2000 and the main objectives is to record the narratives of everyone involved in war efforts-veterans, war industry workers, USO workers, medical volunteers and others.

Hancock County has always been a patriotic county and I have scene veterans form WW II, Korea, and Vietnam, and the Middle East. Did you know at one time there were cannons in front of the Memorial Building in Greenfield. They were trophies from WW I and were removed October 16, 1942 and used for scrap to be molded for weapons. One cannon was an Austrian howitzer and the other was a small German field piece. They were brought to the Memorial Building by American Legion #119 from New York City. If you go to the front of the Memorial Building in the lawn you can see the small concrete pads on which the cannon rested.

The Memorial Building itself is dedicated to WW i veterans. Go inside and see the plaque. It is built on the the northwest corer of North and East Street. It was dedicated September 30, 1923. It is a Hancock County Building.Originally the second floor was devoted to the use of the American Legion and Auxiliary. The ground floor was to be sued for agricultural lectures and other community activities. Taylor Monford, a Civil War soldier and member of the GAR (Grand Army of the Republic) laid the cornerstone. There was a chicken hatchery at the site before the Memorial Building.

Recently the Indiana National Road Association conducted a workshop on tax credits for those rehabbing old buildings in Historic Districts. About 20 people for the downtown area attended. The location was Bob Hunt's Masonic Building on the corner of main and State. Did you know that was known as the Walker Block at one time. I had the opprtunity to give apresnetation on the National Road and that is one of my favorite topics to research. At the location of the Masonic buidling one stood a large hotel and livery stable which was consumed in the blaze. The fires were 1839 and 1857 both on the north side of the street.

Here's a photo of Dick Jefford of the veterans I interviewed.

Enough. I have told you everything that I know and some things I don't. Talk to me.

2015-02-21

By Joe Skvarenina

Chuck Hibner from Mt. Comfort writes, "The major office for the 2014 General Election was Secretary of State How many years do you have to go back for this to have happened before?" I don't know. Do any of political Historians know?

Do you remember the old Red Crown Service Station on Main Street in the front of the Old Longfellow School in the 1920's? All traces of the Longfellow School 1880-1920 are gone and an apartment building is on the site. The service station building is still in existence. For many years it was known as Brad's for Harold Bradbury. Here are two photos of when the station was a Phillips Station in 1949 and Union 76 Station in the 1980's

Tom Van Duyn shares with us the story of his surrogate grandfather William Thomas Cooper who was also Van Dun's name sake. Tom Van Duyn's dad married Tom Cooper's daughter. It seems William Thomas Cooper or just plain 'Tom' lived 1 3/4 miles west of Willow Branch and was surrounded by all the mementos of the thrills of his active life For 14 straight years Tom was a race horse driver on the half mile tracks of Indiana, Illinois, Tennessee, Iowa, Minnesota and other states. He quit driving in 1904. At a race in Marion Frank James the brother of Jesse James, the outlaw, was the official starter. Frank James was also an outlaw. After Tom won three heats with ease James slapped a \$25 fine on Tom for holding the horse back in the first heat. So he was fined by an outlaw. Also Tom Cooper recalled one time at the turn of the century when he was in Minneapolis after he got off of the train an old man on the platform pointed out the Younger brothers , Cole and Jim, to him. The Younger brothers were sent jail in Minnesota for a holdup. When he saw them they were on leave. The Minnesota Governor had given them permission to visit Frank James in Missouri. Van Duyn other grandparent was Dr. Catt who was a well known vet. before they had to go to school.

I met Tom Van Duyn at a meeting of the Upper White River Archeology Association. These folks are concerned with the Mounds new reservoir and its effect on the Mounds State park and I believe they are correct with their concerns. I don't believe we should chance destroying the ancient mounds. If you have an opinion let the state know.

Enough. I have told you everything I know and some things I don't. Talk to me.

2015-02-14

By Joe Skvarenina

Roy Wilson writes, "My brother, sister, & I bought the house/farm from the estate of Ruth Apple in May. As next door neighbors for 60 years, the Apples always told us it was an old stage coach depot on what was then called The Old National Road.

I'd be happy to take you & Cheryl a tour of the house & farm where we believe there was an old bridge over Nameless Creek, formerly used by the stage line.

While we are not attempting to "restore" the home, we are trying to "preserve" it. I found it incredibly interesting that the basement, and the other 2 levels of the original one room per floor home, each had a fireplace--yes, a fireplace in the basement. In my career, I've been in thousands of homes & I've never seen a fireplace in the basement.

Your anonymous contributor is correct, the 3rd story is very interesting

My siblings & I still live next door to the Apple farm. A neighbor involved with local historical activities did some research and told me the brick on the house was made on site and had egg shells mixed in the brick recipe—which we found. I'm in the process of obtaining permission to give you her name and phone number."

Tom Van Duyn has done some research on the property with the family members, Sue Smith and John Apple, Tom says there are five fire places in the house and believes that it is was used for some type of commercial purpose like a stage coach stop. Richard McDaniel told me that the cement water troughs for the animals are in the woods across the way.

So I do believe it was an old stage stop. But was it along the Old Centerville Road which ran south to the National Road?

In the early days along the road there were wagon stands and drovers houses where tired horses rested overnight. Great loads were often packed into Conestoga also rested at these sites. Drovers corralled herds of cattle, hogs, sheep and even turkeys at these locations.

Enough. I have told you every things that I know and some things. I don't. Talk to me.

2015-02-07

By Joe Skvarenina

Gary Wright wondered if that yellow house on the south side of was an Stage Coach Inn. The Cleveland Inn or Holiday Lodge is on the north side of the road and U have just become aware that history tells us that there were two good side inns in Cleveland. Does any one have any information?

Jim Mayfield gave me a good lead the other day. It seems that Niles White claims to be the oldest living paper boy in Greenfield? he delivered the Reporter and the Times Newspapers on the Court House Square. Niles is 86 years old! Do you think it is true. Niles also tells us about the training airplane which crashed at State Route 9 and Boyd School House Road which is 300 N across the street from Moore's Auto. The year was 1942 and four boys were killed in the accident. It was a B26 bomber and was attempting to land in Anderson when it blew up clipping off the tree tops. Niles was 13 years old at the time and the Deputy Sheriff allowed him to go back and look at the wreck. It was coming from Wright Paterson Base in Dayton. Some people say they still find wreckage in the field

Ted Willets provides was with the two photos of the damage done by the 1902 tornado. His Grandmother Ross later died from the injuries as well as her baby. The barn was a total lost and the house was only damaged and later remodeled. The property was located at 1148 N 800 East. Most all property in the area sustained some type of damage from the storm. A horse died in a barn was later found 1/2 mile east.

Sadly I had the opportunity to attended Major Jack Stewarts funeral this fall. Jack saw duty four times in Vietnam and has at least two Purple Hearts to show for it. Wife Elayne is a long time history and PAWS volunteer. Condolences to Jack and his family. He was interned at Arlington.

Did you know there is a Vietnam Veterans Memorial S Rd, 9 which lists the 12 individuals from Hancock County who lost their lives in the conflict. Also a plaque on the wall at the Greenfield Armory honors two members of the Greenfield Unit who lost their lives while Company "D": was engaged in Southeast Asia, The Company was disbanded in Greenfield after the war.

Enough. I have told you everything that I know and some things I don't. Talk to me.

2015-01-31

By Joe Skvarenina

Miriam White Bowman writes, "My grandmother, Emma Cary of Knightstown was one of eight children. Her father was Abraham Munson Cary Waitsell was the person that platted Knightstown in 1827. At the time Jonathan Knight was a surveyor of U.S. 40 so they named the town after him. One of my grandmother's sisters married a Mr. Thomas and had two children, a son Roscoe and a daughter Leone. She married Burt Jackson. They lived on what is now the Caryl Shelby home. Roscoe bought the Cleveland Inn. He spent winters in the east and summers at the Cleveland Inn. He redid the house and had a beautiful back. There was a big covered porch all across the back of the Inn. My grandmother, mother, sister and I used to sit him in the summer. This was in the late 1920's and early 1930's. He grew beautiful roses and other flowers in the yard."

Thanks for sharing your memories .

June Jacobs Cecil Walker owned the old Stage Coach Inn in Cleveland in the 1960's. Before Roscoe Thomas it was operated by the Sample family. It was known as a half way house. Half way between Richmond and Indianapolis. Walker tells us that three fourths of the house was original and the dinning room had solid hand hewn walnut timbers. The ceils called it Holiday Lodge and since it was so close to Greenfield many community banquets, celebrations and other parties were held at the location. Stories would appear in the Daily Reporter: "A farewell dinner honoring Marina Sgt. Tom Jacobs held June 25 on the lawn at the Holiday Lodge..." It was six miles form Greenfield and a well lighted sign marked the stop. A half-a-chicken dinner was \$2.50. It included a relish tray, mashed potatoes, green beans or buttered corn, cole slaw or cottage cheese, hot biscuits and desert and coffee. A 12 ounce T bone steak was \$3.25.

June and others tell the property was haunted by Roscoe Thomas?

Jeff Dye tells us that his grandfather James Randolph one ran the county home. His mother actually lived there.

Enough. I have told you everything that I know and some things I don't. Talk to me.

2015-01-24

By Joe Skvarenina

James Frazell writes, " We are the engineering firm looking into a new county fairgrounds located on U.S. 40 on the east side of Greenfield. I wanted to reach out to you to determine if there are any historical issues we should be aware of during the planning process.

There are several cemeteries in the area and Sue Baker's book provides us with the best descriptions. The Caldwell Cemetery is on the south side of US 40 between 400 and 500 East. It started in 1834 as a family burying ground. It is maintained by the township. There is also a Pauper Cemetery on the north side of US 40 East across the highway from Caldwell. There is no evidence of graves but a grove of trees marks the burying ground. In 1887 the Hancock County Infirmary or Poor Farm was situated on the north side of US 40 and this area was used as a burying ground for deceased residents. In the 1890's the Poor Farm was moved to the south side of the road. Legend has it that there is an unmarked burying ground at the back of this property by the old railroad tracks.

Charlie White tells us that there was a P.R. Mallory Plant at 111 East Main Street in Greenfield during the 1960's. Do you remember it? The Greenfield Plant specialized in materials for the automotive industry. It produced 15000 parts per day for Autolite and the Ford Motor Companies. Also did you know that in 1960 there were 16,800 telephone calls made in Greenfield per day. It was in 1957 that Greenfield joined the Indiana Bell family of exchanges. At that time the Hopkins telephone numbers were adopted. In those days there were 4500 telephones in Greenfield including 3300 main phones and 1200 extensions. It was rumored in those days that push button phones will replaced the rotary dial.

I was invited by the Riley Memorial Association this fall to lay the wreath at Riley's and William Lowe Bryan's graves at Crown Hill and the kids from Mt. Comfort school showed up to help out. Later I took the tour of Riley's house on Lockerbie Street. Mr. Riley lived in this home for 23 years of his adult life. This facility has just built a new Visitors Center which features a new documentary on Riley. The film contains some of the snippets from the long lost Indiana centennial film of 1916. It worth the trip just to see this film effort. I have been told that Riley was apolitical. But his close friend was Eugene V. Debs from Terre Haute. Debs first encountered organized labor in the rail yards of Terre Haute. Later he received national attention for his role in the Pullman Strike of 1894. After Debs helped found the American Socialist Party and ran repeatedly for President starting in 1900. In 1912 he received one million votes. In 1916 he won an Indiana Congressional seat. In 1918 he was jailed under the Espionage Act. In 1918 Debs was jailed for his anti war beliefs. He was released in 1921 and died five years later in 1926.

Riley wrote..."Gene Debs-a man 'at stands and jest holds out in his two hand as warm a heart as ever beat betwixt here and the Jedge ment Seat."

Enough. I have told you everything that I know and some things I don't. Talk to me.

2015-01-17

By Joe Skvarenina

Max Bradley from Texas writes, "I was researching more of my family history. I was going to visit Hancock County with my kids. I am a descendant of William Bradley, whose the brother of Nelson Bradley. I have found information on the Church and was wondering if there was any other places that I could take my kids to visit. I have a file my grandmother gave me before she passed that helped my find information on William and Nelson."

Nelson Bradley was a community leader. He served as President of the Greenfield Banking Company for 38 years resigning in 1909. He was the first President of Greenfield Banking. He was also Hancock County Treasurer for two terms in 1863. The Bradley Methodist Church was named for Nelson Bradley. He and his wife donated the property on which the church is currently located. Mr. Bradley was treasurer of Hancock Lodge 101 F&AM from 1870 till his death, Brother Bradley lead the way with a contribution of \$1,000 when the new temple was built on Walker, corner on State and Main Street. Prior to that time the Lodge was located in the Hancock County Seminary on the corner South Pennsylvania and Depot Street which would have been in the front of Ranch Market. The second location would have been a three story building on Pennsylvania and West Main which is the auto parts store. This was built in 1854. I don't believe has any remnant of the old building is left. The third location at Walker Corner now the Performing Arts Center which had the cornerstone laid on October 10, 1895. The Lodge is now in it's fourth location on Tague Street. Poet Lee O. Harris was a member of the Lodge.

Irene and Bert Curry tells that the first African American graduate of Indiana University was a student from Greenfield High School. Marcellus Neal graduated with his Bachelor of Arts in Mathematics in 1895. After graduation Neal held short term teaching assignments and traveled in both Europe and Canada. Later he lived in Chicago and had a Civil Service job. In 1939 he was hit and killed in a hit and run. He is buried in Mount Greenwood Cemetery in Illinois. The Neal-Marshall Alumni Club 1981 and the Neal-Marshall Black Cultural Center were named in his honor. By the way Frances Marshall was the first black woman graduate of IU and she share's his honors. Neal and Marshall were the first stars of black achievers at IU. In 1995 the Indiana General Assembly passed a resolution honoring the 100th Anniversary on Neal's graduation.

At times African American History pops up for Hancock County. After the Civil War there was a an African American church at the location of Dave's market. Do you know of anything else?

Enough. I have told your everything that I know and some things I don't. Talk to me.

2015-01-10

By Joe Skvarenina

Jake Gumberts writes , "I came across these pictures of a train wreck that happened in Greenfield about 1955-56 or maybe 1957. I was standing on Pennsylvania Street when I took them the Courthouse clock tower can be seen in the background of one of the photos. I seem to remember a tank car ruptured and spilled a chemical and an unpleasant odor hung around Greenfield for a number of days." This is what I found!

On Tuesday September 23, 1956 23 freight cars jumped the track on the Pennsylvania Railroad at 10:35 in the morning, The site was the crossing on East Street now American Legion Place. The cars were in a middle of a 57 car train. After the first car derailed the tracks were subsequently being torn and mangled and dragged behind the train. Four of the cars piled in the crossing at Meek Street. Tank cars carrying chemicals jacked knifed leaking their contents. Ethylene oxide burned into the air for two hours as firemen attempted to contain the leak. They were assisted by departments from Shelbyville, Rushville, Warren Township, Mt. Comfort, Franklin Township and Indianapolis to get the fire under control. The train cars continued to fume for ten hours. Foam chemicals from Anderson were eventually brought in to fight the fire. All families along three blocks of Meek Street had to be evacuated. Some say a large section of Greenfield could have been blown up.

Not long after on January 30, 1963 a 30 boxcars of an Indianapolis Freight Train were jerked off of the track when the axle assembly broke in Greenfield. The axle break occurred on the 25 car of 105 unit train and caused a block long pileup. A railroad official said the damages were \$500,000.

Enough. I have told you everything that I know and some things I don't. Talk to me.

2015-01-03

By Joe Skvarenina

If you go down State Highway 67 between Fortville and Pendleton you come to the town of Ingalls and the Interurban Park which commemorates the Alfont crash. On February 2, 1923, 6 P.M. this accident more than any other event brought the end of the Union Traction Company. At 5 P.M. a heavily loaded two-car passenger interurban left the Indianapolis Traction Terminal and passed the Mur siding in Fortville. Fifteen minutes later the Muncie-Indianapolis also heavily loaded and pulling a trailer cleared the Anderson station. At Alfont, an unincorporated community southwest of Ingalls the trains came in sight of each other. The Muncie train stopped dead on the tracks before the conductor and another person leaped to safety. The other train's conductor decamped without stopping or slowing the train down. The wooden cars crashed head-on, the Indianapolis car mashing the motorman's vestibule and baggage compartment of the Muncie Interurban, finally coming to rest in the fourth row of the regular passenger seats. Both cars carried passengers and movie film for theater use. The movie film burst into flames and swept into three of four cars that were involved in the crash. Sixteen people were killed and many were trapped in the fire and wreckage. Wayne Guthrie one of those who escaped told of a man who begged to be killed before the fire reached him. A three gallon bucket, coins, teeth, rings and other personal items were taken from the wreck. The Union Traction company became corporately liable and its finances were destroyed.

It is also interesting to note that the Pendleton Reformatory was built with materials from Union Traction. In addition the state of Indiana used Union Traction to send released prisoners home. Prior to Alfont 37,61042 miles were operated and 76,349,109 passengers were carried without a fatality.

Thanks to Alberta Calland for this information. Her grandfather Warren Jessup worked in the Shirley Depot.

Enough. I have told you everything that I know and some things I don't. Talk to me.

2014-12-27

By Joe Skvarenina

Ronn Berry writes," I moved to the local area from the Richmond area about 10 mos. ago and have enjoyed reading your articles since being here. Before moving to this area I had been putting together the history of auto race tracks in east central Indiana. Not including the Hancock Co. area although I have come across some info on the 5 tracks (maybe 6 ?) located in the area. In talking to some people I was told you wrote an article on the local tracks a few years back. Is there any way to get a copy of article ? And would you have any info not in the article."

I know that there was a track in Charlottesville at one time. But I don't know if it was an auto or horse track. Do any of you? I also know that there was track on 300 South off of State Rd Nine. It was a smooth dirt stock car track and the racing was stopped after some one was killed at the site. The remnants of the track still exist in the woods. By side of Riley Park Tire in the empty field they used to flood the field for boat racing and later for midget car racing. There also was a horse racetrack in Warrington. It was called the Driving Track Association and attracted many large crowds. It was acclaimed to be the best one half mile track in the area. Can any fill in any of the rest. I know that the Hancock Boys and Girls Club used to sponsor midget racing in Riley Park.

I get requests for old post cards. I have returned the ones you have shared with me. So if you have any let me know. Here's one of the Hoosier Poet Motel four miles east of Greenfield on the corner of the National Road and State Road 209 which is no longer. Can you find it? No much left. The word motel is 20 th century. I hotel for motorists or a motel.

Enough. I have told all that I know and some things. I don't. Talk to me.

2014-12-20

By Joe Skvarenina

Dianne Deitch writes, "I met with you about a property in New Palestine and was talking about turning it into a restaurant....

I am looking at a property in Greenfield --an abandoned church. It is at 204 East North Street What type of history is found at that location?" Do you already have some information on it?"

The church that you are talking about is Pastor Berry's old church and that is how I know the building. It was called a Protestant Church and was Pentecostal in nature. Before that the church housed a Nazarene Congregation. I need the assistance from the readership on this one. Does anyone know about the building?

Did you know that Newton R. Spencer founder of the Daily Reporter served as Hancock County Republican Chairman in 1900 and 1901? Later he was appointed postmaster and served as the Indiana Republican Editorial Association President in 1915. When Spencer first came to Greenfield he practiced law with Elmer J. Binford. Later son Dale B. Spencer ran against William H. Larabee a New Palestine physician, who was a democrat,, for the 11th District Congressional seat. I do believe that Larabee won the election. The year was probably 1938.

Ken Leland tells s about his new book entitled "1812 Land Between the Fires" a novel about the Chief Menominee of northern Indiana. It is published by Friendship Press and you get get more information by going to his website, www.kenlelandauthor.com. You should find it interesting.

The earliest possible Indian artifacts found in Indiana date back to 9000 BC. There are 95 identifiable archeological sites in the county which cover Paleo Indians to the Archaic period along with Woodland culture. A number of years ago it was learned that a field along the Fortville Pike there might be materials left by ancient people below the surface of the ground in some areas. The family living in the area noticed after plowing for the first time that many "gold rings" could be seen across the field. An investigative team for IU discovered these rings were fire rings where the Indians worked to split rock around the fire to shape axes and othet stone utensils. This was a a trading point where materials were brought to trade to tribal groups in a wide area of Indiana and beyond.

2014-12-13

Merry Christmas. Do you remember Christmas 1954? I was six years old then and can remember the family gatherings. I got my first pocket knife and immediately cut my thumb. Christmas was festive in Hancock County with many Christmas parties. Mrs Tony Dorset entertained the Tri Kappa Associates. Mr. Dorset worked at CarMac's Clothing Store. The Christian Home-builders' class of Wilkinson Church of Christ went caroling and enjoyed refreshments in the church basement. Brandywine Girls' 4-H entertained and their parents with a steak dinner at Fishers Restaurant. I believe Fishers was at the current location of the Moose Club under the leaders Mrs. Clarence Jones and Mrs. Raymond Parks. Otterbein Ladies Aid of the E.U.B. Church met at the home of Mrs. Lois Brown at Mt. Comfort for where Christmas Carols were sung. Santa's Helpers provided Christmas needs for 150 children who other wise might have had a bleak Christmas thanks to Clifford Fields, Irwin Brown and others. All the request were filled, Fields reported. A appeal was made to the public for \$400 deficit. Psi Iota Xi placed collection boxes in various businesses.

My wife and I had the opportunity to celebrate the 175 Anniversary Sunday with Nameless Creek Christian Church and retiring Pastor Jim Carcia. He isn't that old but has been with the congregation for 22 years and he is really a great person. Over the years the church has had 68 ministers. The church was founded September 8, 1839 with eight persons. In 1841 the name of Union Meeting House was changed to the Reformed Baptist Church of Christ. In 1844 Reformed Baptist was dropped and the church became known as the Church of Christ. According to the congregation there is no record when it became known as Nameless Creek Christian Church. There has been four church buildings and the current one was built in the 1950's after a fire destroyed the beautiful 1904 structure. History tells us that Nameless Creek is the second oldest congregation in Hancock County. At an anniversary celebration held in 1897 supposed 1000 people attended the event. Thanks to Judy Martin for information.

Enough I have told you everything that I know and some things I don't. Talk to me.

2014-12-06

By Joe Skvarenina

Stu and his wife Stacey Poe came into the library the other day to chat. It seems they found a some very interesting items in the attic of the Walker home on Pennsylvania and Walnut Street In Greenfield . On such item was for a retailer in a one story frame building on Railroad Street and Illinois in Shirley. This would have been Lot 1-80 of the George W. Sowerine Addition. It seemed to be a list of things for a pool room and lunch counter. Is the building still there? The certificate is dated 1902.

I know that the town of Shirley was practically destroyed by a fire on October 8, 1908. The fire was discovered on the Hancock County side in Wood's Block. The fire burned as far west as the Big Four Railroad and as far east as the building extended. The property damaged was estimated at \$60,000 which was a lot in those days. In 1910 and 1911, for better fire protections, the community built the Shirley water tower, The gravity water system cost the town \$4,141.50 and the tank had a capacity of 38,000 gallons. The elevation was 105 feet in the air.

It seems that the first fire fighting equipment for the town was a hose cart. According to one early fire fighter, "By the time you pulled the cart to the west edge of town, you didn't have enough wind to fight the fire."

Enough. I have told you everything that I know and some things I don't. Talk to me.

2014-11-29

By Joe Skvarenina

Pegge Jo Althoff writes, "My father – Robert M Wampler – owned the building at 14 W Main Street that was the former bank and the ‘home’ of the bank vault in question.

I’m not sure it was the Greenfield Bank but thought it was named Citizens Bank which became Hancock Bank & Trust.

The bank started construction of the building but had to wait to finish the front and back until the circus came to Greenfield so elephants could put the vault in place. It is a beautiful piece of artwork that sat on main level (which is ½ level up from the street) and my dad used it for storage of personal and business paperwork. I remember having to open the doors to get ‘stuff’ out and how heavy they were.

I did stop in the building a couple of years ago to see the vault and it was still sitting in the alcove that housed it and was still a beautiful memory of days passed..." Pegge you are correct it was Citizens and thank you for solving this mystery

The Citizens Bank was organized as a partnership or private bank in 1873 by Philander Boyd, John Simmons, William S Wood, and Israel Poulson with others. Philander Boyd was president. On opening day there were 12 depositors who deposited \$1,365. The first deposit was made by Thomas Mitchell. According to legend he 'Bank Open' and 'Bank Closed' signs were painted by James Whitcomb Riley. The capital of the bank was \$60,000.

Enough. I have told you everything that I know and some things I don't. Talk to me.

2014-11-22

By Joie Skvarenina

Gene Gibbs wrote, "I talked to you last week on locating a Glenn Gibbs address when he was a farm hand for Mr. Jacob McDaniel at Rt 1 Markleville Indiana in 1940. Census in 1940 show Mr. McDaniel as head of family. Laura L. Wife, Sarah J Udell sister-in-law, Martha L. Thalls as Granddaughter, and Glenn H. Gibbs as farm hand. He was my father. I would like to know if you could find the exact location where this farm was and or if anyone would still remember any of household members or my dad. I am doing genealogy research and would like to locate this place in 1940. My father died when I was eleven and trying to find out about him as much as I can. The location was Hancock County in Brown Township. Location was in Hancock County-Brown Township. His email address is mgibbs@mycable.com.

Susie Maroska visited the other day. Her son's and family barn is on 900 North between Eden and Milners Corner's. It is a bank barn which was built in 1894 by Johnston Henry Frank Susie's grandfather. The location is Green Township and was recently on the Landmarks Tour. According to the Richman History of Hancock County "...he settled on the farm enjoining the home place where he continued to reside...He engaged in general farming and stock raising and his farm is provided with excellent barns and farm buildings which he erected and all the appointments necessary for modern, up-to-date farming and stock raising." Susie remembers going to the movie in Greenfield and walking around the square till the movie began.

Steve Rash visited me the other day. Steve was on the county council in 1976. We had a wonderful conversation about beautiful downtown Eden. Alonzo Rash built the service station at the corner of 9 and 234 in 1938. He died in 1953. I do believe that it started as a Texaco station later becoming a Gulf Station. From 1957-1960 they sponsored the Eden Gulf which was a little league team which won the 1960's Fortville Championship. There is currently a car lot at the site. The station is long gone.

Eden was once known as Lewisburg and was laid out in 1835. Early businesses included a store, blacksmith, and a tannery. Eden claimed the first legal distillery in the county. In later years the Barnard Sorghum factory produced 1200 gallons of sorghum per day. By 1880 there were 10 one room school houses in Eden.

I have been told the Quonset hut building was the one time the Green township fire station before the new one was built.

Enough I have told you everything that I know and some things I don't. Talk to me.

2014-11-15

Calvin Fletcher

By Joe Skvarenina

The Diary of Calvin Fletcher extends from 1817 to 1866 and the Indiana Historical Society has reprinted this very fine primary historical source and it is worth examination by serious researchers. Fletcher was a central Indiana lawyer, farmer and banker. He read law in Urbana, Ohio and Indianapolis and was admitted to the bar in both states. He practiced law in Indianapolis and for twenty years he traveled twice a year the fifth judicial circuit which included Hancock County and ten other Indiana counties. Fletcher was antislavery and advocated colonization. He was a temperance proponent. In 1865 he was the highest income tax payer in Marion County. Over the years his journeys took him down the National Road. In 1827 he wrote, "that National Road has been permanently located west to the state line." In 1835 he tells, " Take the National Road as roads have not been much traveled are very rough. We proceed to Knightstown 60 houses National Road not yet constructed but workman at it. Raysville nearby with four houses." In 1838 Fletcher reports, " grading going on macadamizing the National Road." In 1848 he tells, "Germans 11 miles east and south of the National Road have commenced the process of draining and will ultimately dry of tilling." This was probably the Jacob Schramm family in the New Palestine area. In 1850 Fletcher, wrote, " went to Cumberland and dined with Colonel Robinson and Theodore Johnson both engaged in the construction of the plank road between her and Greenfield ...and one toll booth.

Using primary sources can be very useful and rewarding when looking into the past. The first hand viewpoint can be very useful to the historian when you are attempting to construct the story.

Enough. I have told every thing that I know and somethings I don't. Talk to me

2014-11-08

By Joe Skvarenina

William Trail, a former slave, was an early settler of Shirley. Mr. Trail and Jesse Johnson owned a farm on the west side of town. Before the Panhandle Railroad was built through Knightstown in 1853 he took loads of wheat to Cincinnati. It took him 5 to 7 days to make the journey. He great granddaughters , Artemia and Chotile taught school in Washington D.C. They were both born on the farm. Chlotile received her graduate education from Columbia University. She was well known educator.

Now here is the rest of the story.

William Trail in 1814 fled from James Blakley's Plantation in South Carolina to Indiana Territory. Hired slave catcher James Cleveland pursued Trail into Connersville Indiana where he resided as a free man. Cleveland had entered into an agreement with Trail's former owner Blakely to catch Trail after an earlier agreement to emancipate had not been fulfilled. Eventually Trail entered into another agreement with his owner to purchase his own freedom for the sum of \$300. He paid the debt and a " Deed of Emancipation" was filed with the County Recorder. William Cunningham was engaged to collect the \$300 but never turned over the funds over to Trail's owner. But since the Deed of Emancipation had been filed the question of Trail's freedom had been settled and subsequent attempts were stopped. Trail then purchased twenty five acres in the Connersville area and became an active member of the community. In 1832 William Trail sued Rev, James Smith for slander and won a \$25 judgment. Trail was accused of burning down Smith's barn. After winning the judgment Trail sold his farm and moved to Henry County. Trail was committed to freedom and his own dignity. Four of Trail's sons served in the Union Army during the Civil War. Two of his brothers died in the conflict. His youngest son Benjamin died at the Battle of Crater. The family established a school in Trails Grove near Shirley. After the Civil War William Jr. became a prosperous farmer and developed Trails Grove community. He is probably the one known as the founder of Shirley.

Thank you to Georgia Cravey who shared her information on William Trail with me. The Winter Issue 2013 of Traces will tell you more. Also look at Volume 1817-1826 Blackford Reports.

Enough. I have told you everything that I know and some things I don't. Talk to me.

2014-11-01

By Joe Skvarenina

Renee Rupley writes "I read your article on local history and the mention of Greenfield Banking Company in the Daily Reporter this weekend. Your information agrees with the history of the bank except for one thing. The year the bank opened was 1871 rather than 1876.

It's pretty amazing that a bank has been in business for over 137 years (138 this September!). Though I don't believe it's the oldest bank in the State, it is quite a feat."

I asked Renee about a reader who wondered if the Greenfield Banking Company had an elephant lift the vault in the original bank building. I have been asked about this by two people in the past. She says this is not true at least to the best of her knowledge.

Barb wants to know about William Thomas born May 177 1753 and died November 11, 1811. He is buried in Sugar Creek Township cemetery probably with his second wife Elizabeth. He was a Revolutionary War soldier and arrived in Hancock County about 1820. If you know anything at least about William Thomas contact Barb at Barbb37@aol.com.

Bill Kidwell from Vancouver Washington writes that he wants information on the County Infirmary or farm which he found on the 1887 Hancock County Atlas. He also want to know if there was a gunsmith in the county in 1840 or 1850?

In 1851 the Hancock County Commissioners bought the George Anderson farm for the propose of providing a home for the poor. In 1866 the County Commissioners bought another farm to house the poor. There was a frame building residence on this farm used as an infirmary. In 1883 it was decided to construct a new building. The administration building was in front with two story brick section in the rear. Men lived on the first floor and women on the second. It was heated with steam and had iron beds and chairs. There were separate dining rooms. Two tubs provided weekly baths. At one time it was suggested to be turned into an industrial training school for boys. This is the building you are looking at on the map. The building was still around when I first moved here and I don't know when it was torn down. The site is currently the sheriff's shooting range and the location of the proposed new fair grounds Do any of you know anything about a gunsmith in the 1840-50's?

Enough. I have told you everything that I know and some things I don't. Talk to me.

2014-10-25

By Joe Skvarenina

Ron Sanders from the Shambles writes, "...recently someone told me that my cabin was once a stagecoach stop. Quite possible. My online research has gone no where. Do you have any info or leads on stagecoach lines, routes or stops."

Ron is actually talking about the Log Cabin which at the front of the Shambles property on 40 in the Cumberland area.

In Hancock County there were Inns and Tavern located at Charolttesville, Cleveland, Greenfield and Philadelphia along the Old National Road. Also in New Palestine along the Old Brookville Treaty Road. The Dayton and Indianapolis Stage brought passengers along Route 40. Also animals, flocks of Turkey were also driven along the old pike. Here are some of the sites which can still be indentified.

The Gooding Tavern, on the southwest corner of State and Main in Greenfield had various very important visitors like fomer President Martin Van Buren and Henry Clay. The site is the current location of the Greenfield City Hall. The Gooding Tavern was begun in 1832 by Joseph Chapman and later additions were added by Asa Gooding. It was run for many years by Gooding's wife Matilda. Another, the Guyman New Hotel was built in the 1840's was destroyed by a fire in 1900 and now the site is an empty parking lot beside the Lincoln Pancake House. The second floor balconey on the Guymon House was an excellant space for public speeches. Mary Landis was an earlier tavern keeper in Charlottesvile sat at her window and counted ninety prairie schooners going west on the National Road and this property is still there used as a family home. There was an Inn in Cleveland which also served as a restaurant. At one time it was the academy which was run by Roscoe Thomas. It is also currently a home. The long gone Dunbar House on the corner of State and Main was the site of a Civil War argument and knifing. I am sure that there is more.

Have you ever been in the Arts Center or the old Masonic Hall? Sandy Hall, local artist, has a studio at the site from which she runs an art camp. My grandson Max attended one this summer which he enjoyed very much. You ought to go see all her painting. She is skilled.

I was in Shirley at the Octagon House Fish Fry the other day. Have you ever been in the Octagon House? You need to go. The conversation with the group led to old Billie Goat Hill. Darrell Deck says the proper location was the west side of Shirley around the site of the old Shirley Founder and Radiator. According to Deck the reason it was called Billie Goat Hill was because it smelled like rotten eggs at the site. I guess it was some chemical used in the manufacturing of radiators which caused the smell. Don Hamms and Yvonne Dye were also involved in the conversation. For those asking me about Billie Goat Hill here you go

But I cannot find indication of the use of Ron's cabin. Do any of you know?

Enough I have told you everything that I know and some things I don't. Talk to me.

2014-10-18

BY Joe Skvarenina

Tom Graham writes., " I've noticed you have a book about the GOP in Hancock Co. From what I've been told Greenfield was at one time a Democratic strong hold. I think this would be a very interesting subject to most people since today since we seem to be stuck in a conservative quagmire.
Just a thought."

Former Representative Ray Richardson tells, "When I moved to Hancock County in 1962 the population was 27,000. The county voted democratic but republican could be elected. Sugar Creek Township was one precinct and it was democrat. Republicans spent a lot of time going door to door... We registered republicans. Registration was so successful that in 1974 was the last year republicans lost a contested a county wide election."

In addition 1963 Ray Richardson was the city chairman and most Greenfield mayors were democrats and the republicans had a hard time finding a volunteer to run for mayor. Berry Hurley volunteered and to everyone's surprise he won the election. and continued for eight years when he was defeated by Bill Blue. True Hurley was assisted by a nasty democrat primary. Hurley went door to door and in the days before the Open Door Records Law, Field was denied the request to see the city payroll made a nice headline. Some say Hurley used to go to east greenfield to pass out half pints for everyone who had voted.

In the first Lincoln campaign Hancock County voted for Stephen Douglas for President. In 1864 Lincoln carried Hancock County. In 1866 the democrats became successful in Hancock County and remained so for some time. In 1855 Blue River Township was 75% republican and the most republican township in the county. In the 1880 Presidential election Blue River township was Republican by 68% with 175 voters. In Center Township the same year the vote was 582 democrat and 429 republicans. In Buck Creek Township in 1880 there were 166 Republicans and 178 democrats.

If you are interested in a copy of "Remembering the Hancock County GOP" let me know.

Enough. I have told you everything that I know and some things i don't. Talk to me.

2014-10-11

By Joe Skvarenina

A caller into the Daily Reporter leaves this message, "I hope since Ruth Apple passed, her home will be preserved. It is on Old U.S. 40 and was an old weigh station. As far as I know, the only one in the state. Eighty some years ago I played in the third story. The winding stairs and rafters in the house were beautiful to me then. I didn't know kinds of wood then, just thought it was beautiful and neat."

My wife Cheryl and I went out and took a photo of the site. It is on E100S and this is a new one on me. What puzzles me the most is the Old 40? There were three roads in Hancock County when it was organized. According to John H. Binford, "the first road was an Indian trail called the Napoleon Trace... Binford said it ran through Blue River, Jackson and Green Townships." Russ Trees had it going through Brown Township in addition. Over the years I have attempt to find the old Trace without any luck until Doc Hardin told me he thought it was 700E. But that is north and south. The Brookville and the Centerville or old state road were in existence before Hancock County was organized in 1828. Is it possible that the Old Centerville Road is E100S. I know that the Old Centerville Road followed South Street in Greenfield. Now the National Road began in Cumberland Maryland in 1811 with plans of ending it in St. Louis. But Congress didn't fund it after 1838 in Indiana and it became a toll road after the Central Plank Company took it over in 1851 and laid planks and boards over the surface.

Also other roads in Hancock County became toll pikes to improve travel. The first gravel road was the Knightstown and Warrington gravel road was constructed in 1859 and collected fees. Brookville Road was also a toll road. The last toll road in the county was the New Palestine and Eastern Gravel Road Company which surrendered its charter in 1894.

Roads in the country were graveled after the Civil War. Rural roads wer paved after WWI. the National Road became Route 40 in 1926. So what do you know about Ruth Apple's place? Let me know.

Enough. I have told you all that I know and some things. I don't talk to me.

2014-10-04

By Joe Skvarenina

Ted Lienhart writes,

If you have an interest in History or Genealogy would appreciate discovering the website, ***History of the Great Lakes States***. It is a **free online library** of about 1,400 items about the five states of Illinois, Indiana, Michigan, Ohio and Wisconsin; books, articles, maps and more. Many materials are too rare to be found on the shelves of even the biggest libraries.

All books and articles are in the public domain and available free on the internet. No one is asked to register or provide personal data. About once a week they publish a ***blog post*** that highlights some materials on the site, which you can find by clicking "Blog" on the menu at the top of any site page.

Welcome to Riley Days. Yes, it is that time of year again. Historians know that any new discovery about the "good old days" changes how we think about the present and our expectations of the future. But who was James Whitcomb Riley?

Over the years historians have argued over the influence of one great man shaping a period of history. Nineteenth century romantic philosopher Thomas Carlyle wrote, "The history of what man accomplished in this world is at the bottom of the "Great Men" who worked here." Others believe leaders do not make history but are products of the time and a reflection of the spiritual or material forces that call forth during perilous times and evoke great leadership. James Whitcomb Riley was "great man." He was born Sunday morning October 7, 1849 to Reuben and Elizabeth Marine Riley on a shady street in the sleepy little town of Greenfield. Both parents rejoiced over the birth of their second son. According to the "Complete Of James Whitcomb Riley" published by Harper Brothers, " "...as a reader of his own poems, as teller of humorous stories as a mimic, indeed as a finished actor Riley genius was rare and beyond question." During his lifetime Riley received many recognitions. In 1902 he received an Honorary of Arts from Yale University. The Academy of Arts and Letters elected to membership in 1912 and he was awarded a Gold Medal for his poetry. On October 7, 1911 school children in New York City and Indiana conducted programs in his honor. On his birthday in 1912 Greenfield welcomed him home through a host of children scattering flowers. In 1913 Anderson, Indiana, Indiana State University and Cincinnati conducted Riley Days. In 1915 Columbus Indiana celebrated Riley Days. the poet's last birthday was October 7, 1916 in Indianapolis. In the evening a dinner was hosted by former Vice President Charles Wilson Fairbanks with many other notables. Indiana Governor George Ralston proclaimed Riley Days state wide. On July 22, 1916 Riley passed way.

Enough. I have told you everything that know and some things I don't. Talk to me.

2014-09-27

By Joe Skvarenina

Gene Addison writes, " Just a note regarding Weir Cook----I was a sophomore in 1943 in Wilkinson High School,in the afternoon a a very powerful plane buzzed the High school, it make a noise like we never heard, everyone ran to the windows to see what it was,it was Weir Cook in a P-38 fighter,He buzzed the school two more times. I don,t believe anyone one in Wilkinson had ever this plane before. It was thrilling to say the least. It highlighted the fact that we were at war."

WW II involved the entire community. Many war industries in the surrounding area produced materials extremely important to the war. The tomato packing plants Greenfield's Frazier Packing and Shirley's Foods produced food stuffs. Crops were picked in Hancock county by German prisoners of war held at Morristown and Camp Atterbury. I have been told that Italian prisoners of war picked tomato's at the site of the old KMart. Small factories around the county like Fountaintown Forge produced parts for Jeeps, tanks, and even concrete practice bombs were produced by the Boyer Plant in Greenfield. In fact those bombs line the drive at the Greenfield Cemetery at certain locations still today.

Rationing during WW II soon placed limits on most things needed in daily life and at first it seemed reasonable .But as time went on it became more and more unbearable. On the last page of the 1944 Greenfield High School Yearbook carried this note, "We can't buy sugar, we can'y buy shoes-and are tires are flat -we we got the blues." I guess this sums it up the best. The Ration Board had began operations in 1942. Tires were one of the first things rationed. A flat on the family vehicle could quickly become a major calamity. The first Hancock Rationing Board met on January 5, 1942 and included Dr. C.M. Gibbs, Lattie Hanes, John Souder, and Sam Hughes.The Boys Club collected 7,460 pounds of magazines and 7.650 pounds of paper in a scrap drive. The school children also collected milkweed pods for life preserves and in one drive collected 2,500 bags.

Michael Smith is looking for information on the past residents of the county home. Do you have any ideas? Contact Lynn-Michael@hotmail.com

Enough. I have told you everything that I know and some things I don't. Talk to me.

2014-09-20

By Joe Skvarenina

Vennis Campbell writes, "I enjoyed your article on Andrew Jackson Banks (Reporter June 14,2014).

Mr Banks was a younger half brother to my great great grandfather John P. Banks, who settled in Brandywine Twp about 1835.

I believe Andrew came here about 1850. They were sons of Adam Banks, who brought his family to Indiana in 1815 and settled in

Washington Twp, Wayne County near Milton. Andrew was born to Adam and his second wife. Adam Banks was born 1775 in VA.

My maternal grandmother Laura A. (Banks) Andis was a granddaughter to John P. Banks."

Carole Davis writes, " can you tell me where to me to find old tax records circa 1820-1850. and how does I get access to to them. I am descended from William Crider who came to Hancock County in the early 1830's also Walls, Barnards and Webbs." Robin Lowder our county auditor tells tax records would be found in the treasurer's office and property records in the auditor's office. Please be prepared to do your own looking and they will let you go through the records. Also the Library history room has additional records which might be useful.

My father enrolled in the Civilian Conservation Corps at Downey Idaho. He planted trees.The CCC was one of the many federal alphabet soups agencies that Franklin Delano Roosevelt created to lift this country out of the Great Depression. The CCC also called the tree army employed young men throughout the country on conservation projects and gave them a pay check along with room and board. They were required to send a \$25 of their \$30 paycheck back home to their families. When WW II began these young men enlisted in the military.

In the summer of 1934 James Powers, Charlottesville ; Ray Crowell, Shirley; Paul Richey, Ray Epperson, Charles Myers, Clarence Thornberry, and George Carson of Greenfield enrolled in the CCC. Did you know that there was a CCC training camp at Fort Benjamin Harrison? the buildings are still there and it was called Camp Glenn. Maybe the Hancock County Boys enrolled at this site. In fact the Indiana District Headquarters for the CCC was established at Fort Benjamin Harrison or Camp Glenn in 1933. At Camp Glenn Army officers provided administrative and planning support to distant camps located Indian State Parks, State Forests and Game Reserves. The headquarters also oversaw the rotation of Indiana enrollees to and from work camps in the Western United States..By 1938 39,000 young men passed through Camp Glenn. Later Camp Glenn was used as a prisoner of war camp form 1944-1945. Many of the building at Fort Benjamin Harrison were built with prisoner of war labor.

The building at Camp Glen still stand and there is a small museum at the site. The location is the riding stables were I took all six of my grandchildren riding. It coats \$5 to get into the Fort Harrison Park. Enough I have told you everything that I know and some things I don't. Talk to me.

2014-09-06

By Joe Skvarenina

Nancy Williams writes, "I had heard that the downtown branch of Greenfield banking co .in the late 1800's had the bank vault placed where it is at by an elephant then the building was built around the vault ... could you please let me know if this is true? Does anyone at the Bank have an answer let me know!

Ed West provides us with this ad for the auto- soler with local cobbler Vic De Marco. Vic for many years repaired shoes on North State Street, This is when you could have your shoes resoled and I can remember going to him. Your shoes always looked like new when he was done with them.

John Patton discovered Spring Lake and wants to know more about it. Spring Lake is a town in Hancock County and it is located about one-half mile southwest of Philadelphia. In 1884-84 William Dye built a dam across a gully with many spring to built a lake. It was in the woods and had an excellent location for a picnic grove. It was first called Dye's Grove and it was open for various groups for picnics. A passenger steamer to carry about 30 persons was built on the lake in 1886. The employees of the Pan-Handle Railroad had their annual picnic there. A camp meeting was held there in 1886 with the result of the organization of a congregation of friends in Philadelphia. During the 1880's a sham battle of the Civil War was enacted at the site. In the course of time it became known as Spring Lake. in 1901 the Indianapolis & Greenfield Traction line built a summer theater and it was opened for two seasons. A baseball park drew large crowds at the site in 1903. E.E. Matthews owned the Ball Park for several years. In 1912 a group of persons bought Spring Lake an platted in for homes.

Enough. I have told you everything I know and some things I don't. Talk to me.

2014-08-30

By Joe Skvarenina

Nancy Eccles writes, " My husband and I purchased the old Villa apartments located at 2142 W US Highway 40 in Philadelphia. We are remodeling each unit and cleaned up the property up, still a long way to go. We have learned a lot about its history, but we want to know more. We were told it was built in the 1940's as a motel and had a restaurant. It was later remodeled into apartments.. The owners we know about were the Mueller's, Walls, and Reasner's. I want to find a picture of the original motel."

Can any of you help Nancy. I know that the old motels had postcards. Do you have one a postcard? I don't have this particular one in my collection unless by another name. Any information on the Villa would be appreciated,

As more American took to the highway the number of motels grew rapidly between 1945 and 1951. By 1953, there were 500 motels in the state of Indiana. Today, there are few motels left traveling east from Indianapolis to the state border. Most have been converted to apartments or weekly or monthly rentals. Route 40 especially had had many forgotten motels. In Hancock County there was the Shamrock Court Plaza was constructed east of Cumberland in 1936. It was brick and 14 rooms in Georgian style offered travelers garages between the rooms. The Hoosierland Lodge was 10 miles east of Indianapolis on the National Road (Route 40). The building still stands today. A used car lot is located partially on the site. The Hoosier Poet Motel also on Highway 40 is east of Greenfield. It is still barely standing and about to fall down. It has also served as residential apartments. The Motel Weston in Greenfield is still used for that purpose and has been under other names over the years.

In McCordsville there was the Ross Motel on State Route 67 which offered the newest form of entertainment, the television. It is interesting to note that the word motel came into use to designate a hotel on the highway for travelers or a motor hotel.

Enough. I have told you everything that I know and some things I don't. Talk to me.

2014-08-23

By Joe Skvarenina

Matt Speck writes, "I am in the process of purchasing a home and want to be fully informed of its past, including ownership, events, and any deaths or illnesses that may have occurred on the property? I have been to the recorders office, but could not find much. The property is located at 10547 East U.S. 40 in Charlottesville." This is the Italianate house which is gray and across the street from the old Charlottesville High School. Occupants of the house and owners of the property included Josiah Van Meter 1826, Josiah Van Meter 1847, William Thornburg 1855, Jacob Norris 1855, and Jacob Brown 1877. Mr. Brown might have died at the property. If you have more information you can reach Matt at bookingagant007@kmail.com.

John Humbles stopped in the Library the other day. His mother was a Fortville Caudell. John Caudell the family patriarch was born in North Carolina in 1772. He died in Fortville Indiana in 1839. No one knows the name of his first wife. John had 14 children and 58 grandchildren. He and his second wife Susannah are buried in the Simmons-Caudell cemetery just east of Fortville. Does any one know any more about the Caudell's contact Jack Humbles@yahoo.com.

I recently completed a small history of the Hancock County Republican party, It is called "Remembering the Hancock County GOP. I don't care if you're a Republican or Democrat after the last election you will agree that politics makes the world go around. Former representative Ray Richardson tells, " When I came to Hancock County in 1962 the population was 27,000 to 72,000 today. The County voted for democrats but republican could elected. During those days Sugar Creek Township was one precinct and it was democrat. There are nine Sugar Creek Township precincts and they all vote republican. Richardson adds, "Republicans spent a lot of time going door to door to register them because we knew that most of them would vote republican. Registration was so successful that in 1974 was the last year that Republicans lost a contested election. If it wasn't for Watergate we wouldn't have lost then. Bob Bernhard was a precinct committee man for 48 years he remembers attempting to drive one older lady to the polls and she wouldn't go because she didn't think women should vote. Berry Hurley was a republican mayor of Greenfield from 1964-71. On election day he lost in the primary to Richard Pickett. In 1975, 1979, 1985 and 1987 he ran again. Keith McClarnon was the beneficiary of Berry's elections efforts and served as the democrat mayor of Greenfield for many years. Condolences to the family on his passing. You can pick this book up at the Riley House Restaurant and several other place in town. All proceeds to the local republican party so if necessary ask for a plain brown bag.

Enough. I have told you everything that I know and some things I don't. Talk to me.

Date Unknown

By Joe Skvarenina

My friend Richard Ratcliff, Henry County Historian, recently wrote a new book about the Civil War burials in the Center Grove, Spiceland Friends, and Dunreith Cemeteries. in Henry County. There are forty nine Yankees and two Rebels buried at these sites, I am going to give the book to the Hancock County Library for those genealogists out there. Some interesting burials: Soney Modlin was a member of 28th Indiana Regiment, the only Hoosier African American Regiment of the Civil War, John Esatridge who died in 1928 was the last civil war veteran to die and be buried in Spiceland Cemetery Township. The last surviving Civil War Veteran in Henry County was Joseph Smith. He died in 1941. General William Grose died in New Castle on July 30, 1900. His home is the Henry County Historical Society Museum. His funeral was the largest ever held in New Castle. Harmon Rayl died in 1863 and his remains were brought back to Spiceland and buried in the Spiceland Friend Cemetery and a heavy snow fall hampered the burial. So it was necessary to partially tunnel through the snow to reach the grave.

The photo is of a Greenfield Scout troop in the early of the 20th century. In 1934 the 34th Anniversary of Boy Scouting was celebrated at the Boy's Club. One hundred and twenty five people attended the festivities. Troop One was organized in Greenfield in 1911. An early Scout master was Almond Duncan. This photograph is provided courtesy of Angela Hoffa and it originally appeared in the Greenfield Reporter so I would think this would be Troop I.

Pat Pope provide us with the abstracts from the W.O. Pope. Mr. Pope developed Weston Village, the Weston Village Shopping Center and Pope Airport in Greenfield. If you are researching the history of your house this is a good place to start. I will add these abstracts to the collection at the Library if your are interested in reviewing them. The abstracts include Meadowbrook Addition, John Carr was the first owner back in 1827 before the county was formed. Another was for Samuel Duncan and another for the property that the Pope Airport was located. Another for Bank's and Weston Village subdivisions along with one for the East Side Screw Products dated 1965 and one very small and narrow abstract dated 1915. It is the smallest I have ever seen.

Enough. I have told you everything that I know and some things. I don't. Talk to me,

2014-08-09

By Joe Skvarenina

Good ole Charlie White shares with us a 1928 newspaper clipping about the "Fly Brush Man". Uncle Gus Randall was known far into adjoining counties as the "Fly Brush Man". He raised peacock at his home southeast of Greenfield on the Morristown Pike and made their plumage into the "peafowl brushes" which were familiar along time ago to the best families in the state. Mr. Randall live to a ripe old age and up to the very last of his long life it was his custom to come up to Greenfield every Saturday afternoon to Greenfield and have a good time with the boys.

Did you also know that in 1928 the now closed ford and the lights in Riley Park was paid by the American legion. It was said that the ford completes the park drive and now machines entering the park drive on either the east or west side of the stream can follow the roadway and make a complete circuit of Riley Park coming out on the other side.

IN 1931 the county mourned the passing of the the county store and the last flour mill. It was this year that the Greenfield Milling Company was sold and the machinery was shipped to Georgia.. In was in 1855 that Nathan Crawford, Freeman Crawford and Samuel Longmaker built the original mill. It burned in 1860 and was rebuilt by new owner Hiram Wood. It burned again and Alexander, New Boots, New Brothers, Andrew J. New and Son, and New and Wolf later it was incorporated the Mill as the Greenfield Milling Company. Three generations of the New Brothers operated this mill. As far back as 1840 there were nine grist mills in the county. In 1931 the Freeport Mill was still in operation. In addition the Westland store was closed. The first store was erected there in 1852 by Samuel Heavenridge. it was made of logs. later owners werer Levi Reece, Ambrose Miller, Henry New and another store was operated y Lemuel Harold and Levi Cloud. James Binford then owned the store for a time. It burned in 1881. Another building was erected and it was run by M.A. Catt and John Howard. Later Francis C.L. Landrus bought the store and after his death his widow ran the operation. in addition to store there has been three blacksmiths with the store The store was also housed the post office until Greenfield rural routes were stablished. The store formed a central meeting spot for township residents. Westland was never laid out as a town but it just grew. Thanks Charlie

Enough. I have told you everything that I know and some things I don't. Talk to me.

2014-08-02

By Joe Skvarenina

What do you know about the Charlottesville and the Cleveland Methodist Churches. John Rasor tells the current building of the then Charlottesville Methodist Episcopal was dedicated in 1905. An earlier church was dedicated in 1855. Twice during its history the local congregation has liquidated the congregation's building debt.

Many of the settlers of the Charlottesville area were Methodist's the first services were held in a school house one mile north of town on west bank of 6 Mile Creek on the farm known as Badger's Place. Later a small church was two miles north of town at the Six Mile Cemetery. This church was built by the whole community regardless of church affiliation. This church cost \$70 to build. it was dedicated in 1838. then it became necessary to have church in town and a school house was used on the east bank of the creek. John Foley donated lots for a new church and it was dedicated in 1855. On June 25, 1902 a storm damaged the building quite a bit. the Christian church at the north end of town was demolished at the time. Work was begun and the new building was dedicated in 1904. I do believe that is the current structure.

The Cleveland Methodist Church was 100 years old on Oct 30, 1950. In 1840 a small congregation of Methodist organized and worshiped in people's homes until about 1850. At that time they built a small church a quarter mile north on Cleveland. They worshiped at this site until 1870 when they moved the church down to Cleveland on the National Road. In 1942 the National Road was widened and the church was moved to the back of the lot. In 1965 the Cleveland and the Charlottesville churches combined into one and the building at Charlottesville. It was chosen as the site of the new congregation since it was larger. The altar, side benches and the baptistry was moved from Cleveland to the new site. I am told they are still being used. I do believe that the old Cleveland Church location is west of the Hatfield Camp ground.

Enough. I have told you everything that I know and some things I don't. Talk to me.

2014-07-26

By Joe Skvarenina

Nathan Schwartz writes, "I've been doing a little research and wondered what elementary school Mr. Riley attended?

Riley didn't attend an elementary school as you might know it today. According to the Riley Historian Elizabeth van Allen. "Hancock County lacked public schools facilities when Riley was a boy..Many Schools like Greenfield resisted organizing a local , government education system. Instead individuals opened private schools schools in their homes charging the parents of the students a modest tuition. The school that Riley first attended was one such as this.A Mrs. Neill...taught twenty scholars in her tiny dwelling and kept house and her blind husband in the other. Riley described the room taught her class as 'cold and dim.' The Neill house was located own the street from the Riley's on the National Road of Greenfield...Riley always got along with teachers who recognized his interest in literature and art. The first one of these was Rhonda Houghton Millikan. a widow who moved to Greenfield with her two children from Vermont after her husband died... Riley said he owed hid first gratitude of his heart and soul to last instructor Lee O. Harris." He is the gentleman that Harris School is named after. Mr. Harris also wrote poetry and has at least two books."Harris taught Riley in a church located just south of the railroad Track. In 1870, a public school building finally opened in Greenfield. It was an elegant brick building that cold accommodate nine teachers and five hundred students.During the first term Riley was one of the 236 students enrolled. Lee O. Harris was one of the teachers. Riley was twenty at the time and school term would be his last." So Riley didn't attend Harris School as it is now. I hope I answered you question.

A 6th grader called my about the Octagon House in Shirley.The Shirley Octagon House is one of only six left in Indiana. Jane Ross Reeves built the house in 1879 after reading accounts of the efficiency of an octagon shaped house. Each floor has eight rooms, four rectangular and four triangular.Each triangular room has two big presses or for you younger people closets in the corners. The ceilings are 10 ft. high. There are many fireplaces in the structure. Small portico's were built at the south and east doors. A later owner built a large porch. The cellar had no petitions or dividing walls. The house was constructed of popular and white oak from the Reeves farm. Initially, the house was located between roads 650 N and 700 N, one and one half miles west of Wilkinson. The reeves family hired Brewster and Trasher of Fortville to build the structure. The house cost between \$22 and \$2500 to complete. The house has been moved into Shirley by Darrell Deck and the Octagon House Foundation and they are in process of restoring it for community use. You should go and see it.

Enough. I have told you everything that I know and some things I don't. Talk to me.

2014-07-19

By Joe Skvarenina

Tom VanDuyn knows a lot about Green Township and if you want to know about Green Township History he is the person to talk to about it. There are at least two communities in Green Township no longer on the map. Milners Corner was a thriving small town on the eastern side of the township during the yearly years. A town name Charleston was laid out and platted but was never developed on the west side of the of Cook Cemetery. For reasons unknown Charleston never-came into existence. Cook Cemetery is located on Hancock County Road 400 East between State Road 234 and 900 North. My wife and I traveling the back roads of Hancock located the Cook burying ground and the approximate site of Charleston. In the Cook Cemetery the victims of the Wilson murder are buried. On the morning of June 6, 1878. The bodies of Mrs Wilson and her niece Annaretta Cass were found murdered on the living room floor and bedroom of the home. Both had been strangled. Folks speculated that Steve Bales, Mrs Wilson's brother in law was responsible for the crime. But it could never be proved beyond a shadow of a doubt. A trial held in Greenfield with Judge Charles Offut presiding and Bales was acquitted for a lack of evidence. The Wilson murder has been a topic conjecture ever since it happened. A handsome heads stone marks the final resting place.

No plat was made of Milners Corner. When my wife and I were out the other day we couldn't find the site. Milners Corner just sort grew up and business was conducted at the location for a period of about fifty years. A Post Office was opened at the site in 1868. and lasted until 1903 when the Wilkinson Rural Route took over. There were a number of doctors, blacksmith shops, saw mills and the location.

During both elections Lincoln didn't carry Green Township. In 1869 the vote was Lincoln 79 and Stephen Douglas 152. In 1864 the vote count was 86 Lincoln and 146 McClellan.

Shirley Founders Day is coming up. On August 16 the folks on the organizing committee are looking for some entertainment from 4-7pm. No pay but great experience and it will be appreciated. If you or your group are interested contact Jerry Duke President of the Shirley Historical Society. He can be reached at dkkustomz@mystar.net.

Enough. I have told you everything that I know and some things I don't. Talk to me.

2014-07-12

By Joe Skvarenina

Dianne Deitch writes, "There isn't anything at 115 E Main Street right now. It is an empty house,apartment/restaurant set up. However, in 1916 it was L. A. Schreiber Restaurant (for certain)and either Bakery or Grocery (cannot see the rest of the sign because of another sign hanging in the way of the lettering) Next to the old place was a bank I think, but now, it is also apartments. How unfortunate it is to see those small town --downtown areas die away like that because I really like seeing the old pictures when they were "downtown" and lively--sort of like Greenfield seems to be trying to recreate.

I am a student at IUPUI and I am a part of the Tourism Department. I am looking at a property in New Palestine for a business.....115 E. Main street New Palestine and it has a bit of history. I found a photo on the Indiana History website for it...I would LOVE to have more information about New Palestine if I am going to try to do more in this community.

I would also like to know what you may already have available for this property and the surrounding area of New Palestine. I am honestly in hopes that the "myth" of the high school property and the Red Dragons is a fictional tale."

New Palestine was laid out on October 1, 1838, by Jonathan Evans six months after the town of Philadelphia was laid out. The town was Incorporated in 1871 and had also been known as Sugar Creek and Palestine.The the early 1900's Lewis Schreiber opened the Ye Auto Shop restaurant in the west parlor of the their home. He operated the restaurant until he retired in 1944, after which Henry Wood ran the restaurant for a short time. In addition, circa 1946 Dick and Bonnie Scott decide to open Bonnie Restaurant on the site of Jonathan Evan's home.Many notables dines at this establishment including Jim Reeves, Fabian, Wendell Wilkie and Homer Capehart. I remember Bonnie's for her banana cream pie.The first New Palestine Bank opened in August 1892 in the rear of the brick standing on the northeast corner of Main and Bittner Streets. In 1893 it moved to Main Street where the Masonic lodge is now located. this bank prospered but closed in 1895 due the withdrawal of the owners which was common in those days.In 1897 New Palestine Bank opened for business on the southeast corner of Main and Bittner Streets. A drug store was in the west half of the building and the bank in the east half. In 1925 the Greenfield daily Reporter carried an article concerning a robbery. Several men from New Palestine apprehended the suspects at Gem and called Sheriff Comstock to come and arrest them. Apparently several iron bars over the rear window of the bank had been sawed through and tracks in the snow were made by the rubber boots of one of the suspects. No mention was ever made of the amount of money taken. In 1956 the Bank moved on the corner of Bittner and Walnut Streets behind the Shell. In 1961 the Bank was robbed of \$5,815 by gunman with a .22 caliber pistol.This occurred in the middle of winter and travel was difficult and no suspects were found.

The Old New Palestine High School was built in 1919 and was recently torn down. I don't believe the Dragons and the Klan story. It is probably urban myth.

I have told you everything that I know and some things I don't. Talk to me.

2014-07-05

By Joe Skvarenina

The photo provided to us from Angela Hoffa is a natural gas explosion in 1898 of the Frazier Gant Block in Greenfield. Mr. Horace Barnett was taken from the ruins. I think the site was on North Street before the old city building on the south side right where the microbrewery is going. What are your thoughts. Isn't that the Gant block?

Chris Baggot likes the story about Elijah Tyner. Baggot owns Tyner Pond Farms which is named after Tyner because he was an agricultural entrepreneur. Tyner ran the best known store in Hancock County in the early days. He kept doing business until 1872 and people came to trade from the entire southeastern portion of the county as well as from Shelby and Rush Counties.

Brenda Krekeler sends us the web site for SPOOM. That stands for the Society for the Preservation of Old Mill sites. There are several you can go and see throughout Indiana. The closest being the one in Metamora circa 1887 or the one at Spring Mill State Park circa 1817. There are others scattered throughout the state in places like Roan, Salem, Bridgeton, Bristol and Hobart. It is amazing you don't see many sites around here. I know there is some of the mill race left at Freeport. But the old maps show mills all over the county and the surrounding areas. For example there were a grist and saw mill erected in Blue River Township in 1824 by Joshua Wilson along the Blue River near where the range line crosses it. Wilson operated the mill for two years when Henry Watts purchased it. The mill was probably moved about this time to a point on the Blue River below the Hancock County line though a large portion of the mill race was constructed in Hancock county. In 1840 it was purchased by John Wolf who attached a carding and spinning machine for weaving. Like Tyner's people from all over the area patronized the site. Later a man named Bacon purchased the Mill and it was known for many years as Bacon's Mill. In the 1870's Jacob Wolf son of John Wolf purchased the mill and operated it until the 1890's when it burned down. This was probably the fate of many of our county's old mills. Do you know of any mill sites in the county?

Enough. I have told all that I know and some things I don't. Talk to me.

2014-06-28

By Joe Skvarenina

Beverly Smith writes, "I am sending you information on John Milroy. John Milroy was born in Penn Valley, Pennsylvania on December 12, 1776. His parents were Henry and Agnes Milroy. John and his brother Samuel migrated to Nelson Co. Kentucky and they each married there. John married Isabel Huston (1808) and Samuel married her sister Martha Huston (1810) in Kentucky. Then many of the children, their families along with the mother Abigail moved to Washington Co., Indiana. Samuel and Martha eventually settled in Carroll Co. Both John and Samuel were in the Indiana legislature and Samuel more so. Samuel was the father of Gen. Robert Huston Milroy of Civil War history. John was Robert's uncle. John was also on the board of the beginning of what is now the University of Indiana. John was also involved in the National Road building there in Indiana. John was in the militia and was termed General John Milroy; I think his brother also had that title. John was in the 1812 War in Kentucky. We think it was soon after that when he moved to Indiana. He and Isabel lived in Washington, Lawrence, Monroe, Jackson and maybe Carroll before settling in Hancock County in about 1828. John and Isabel had nine children, Henry, Angeline, James, Martha, Samuel, Alexander, John, Mary, and Nancy. Isabel died in 1845 while visiting her sister, Martha in Carroll Co.

We have confirmed information that James Milroy was my great grandmother's (Mary Jeanette or Genette Milroy) father and from her obituary and other documents we know her mother was Mary Ann Deming. Mary who went by Genette her second name was born in Monroe Co., but in one document she stated she moved to Hancock Co. with her parents as a small child. James and his brothers, Henry and John go to fight in the Texas War of Independence. Genette was born May 25, 1835 (according to her death certificate) in Bloomington, Monroe Co. IN. We have not been able to locate any marriage record for James and Mary Ann nor a divorce record. Mary Ann married a James Avis in 1837 and though we don't have a marriage record for that, we do have her divorce decree. Mr. Avis went to Texas also and apparently Mary Ann didn't want to go to Texas! She then married a man named John Hill and remained in Indiana until after his death. In the divorce decree she states she has two children by Avis and we have documentation as to what happened to each of those children. She also had 5 children by Mr. Hill, two of which died quite young and we have documentation on what happened to each of those children. Mary Ann's obit states she has 6 living children and one of her daughters by Hill is mentioned in Mary Jeanette's obit. So Jeanette knew of her mother and her half siblings. The six children living were: Mary Jeanette who lived with the Milroy grandparents, the Avis boy and girl who are farmed out to Avis family members and reared by them and then the three Hill children who live to adulthood. Henry and his wife die in Texas. John's son John is believed to have died in Texas on in route home from Texas and was the son who John had settling James' estate as James died in Harrisburg (now Houston) Texas in 1839.

I have no Bible records or such on James' birth, only family genealogy that names all the children and we have been able to determine what happened to all the children except Alexander though from family information know when he died....he didn't marry. He died in Indiana, but just where and where buried is not known. We have a census showing Jeanette living with John in 1850. We have land transactions of John's where she is signing along with Nancy Milroy and

a letter that mentions her that was written to her uncle Samuel, John's son Samuel. These families all used the same names with different second names. John died there in Greenfield on Oct. 18, 1858 and was buried in the Old Cemetery along with two of his daughter-in-laws and one daughter of Henry's.

I have checked Presbyterian churches in Monroe Co. in hopes of finding a baptism record for Mary Jeanette, but nothing. This family were staunch Presbyterians so she was probably baptized but where is the question?

Her father was probably born in Kentucky and I am researching there. I may be able to locate his baptism records if that was done as they did have a Presbyterian church there and hopefully that would be much better documentation of his being John and Isabel's son.

I would like to find a probate of John Milroy in hopes his children and Mary Jeanette might be mentioned and perhaps Mary Jeanette's relationship of granddaughter to John might be made.

I am interested in any document regarding the relationship of James to John and Isabel and then Mary Jeanette's relationship to them as well. Bev is working on a DAR application so any additional information you might provide would be useful.

By Act of Congress in 1848 all of the road within the state of Indiana was transferred to Indiana and the Legislature organized the Central Plank Company and was given control of the road between the eastern edge of Hancock County and the western Putnam County line. The Company improved the road by planking it in about 1850. General John Milroy had the contract for the improvement of the road through Hancock County.

Enough. I have told you everything I know and some things I don't. Talk to me.

2014-06-21

By Joe Skvarenina

A gentleman called me the other day and wanted additional information on the Swope family. In 1853 Henry Swope served as Greenfield Postmaster. Later on it seems that H.A. Swope was one of five business men to form a stock company to carry out the banking business in the town of Greenfield. On September 4, 1876 the Greenfield Banking Company was the first bank in Hancock County to open its door on the corner of Main Street and State Streets. The others founders were Nelson Bradley, J. Ward walker, Morgan Chandler, and S.T. Dickerson. Nelson Bradley was the first President and J Ward Walker was the first cashier. The Bank was located at the site of the old Masonic Building. In addition Henry was at one time Clerk of the Hancock County Court, a member of the Odd Fellows Lodge, and served in the Home Guard during the Civil War. I do believe that Henry was married to Mary who was one of the founders of the Cosmopolitan Club for women. The ladies would have self improvement speakers in their homes. If anyone knows more about the Swope's of Greenfield please let me know. He would like to know if they are connected to the Swope's of West Virginia.

Ned Arthur the other day asked me about Chicken Hill and he was surprised when I knew the site. Chicken Hill is located at CR's 400W and 400S in Sugar Creek Township. In the 1920's and 1930's New Palestine residents used to buy their eggs from Mrs. Everson and thus the name of the intersection came into being. Ibeen been told that their was an old mill in the area and now all that is left is the mill run and probably a chicken coop or two.

I just finished writing a history of the Hancock County Sheriff's Department. Did you know that first Hancock County Sheriff was John Foster and he was appointed Sheriff by the Governor in 1828. The county provided the first jail during his term. Samuel Duncan was the second sheriff and he was elected in 1832. He was the sheriff when the first jail burned down. It seems that in 1833 John Hays an ex -sheriff from Rush County became insane and committed battery and wondered into Hancock County. He was arrested by Dunbar and and put in the first log jail. According to the record Hays started a fire in his cell and was consumed by it before he could be rescued...During the 1840's there was some concern about the conditions in the next jail. According to some, prisoners were subjected to some poor conditions. The Hancock County jail at the time was found to be too damp and unhealthy so it was closed. It was duirng this time that Hancock County would ship prisoners to Indianapolis for holding. In the early days this was by stagecoach or horseback and later by train...In 1874 the Grange was organizing an independent county ticket which backed the appeal for salary grabs. The Sheriff's salary would be \$1200.00...In 1870 he first white child born in Hancock County, Jared Meek, ran for Sheriff and he was defeated...Robert Brown became Sheriff just in time to look into the murder of Sam Derry. She was killed in a fight with his sister and her husband over the ownership of a small gosling. In 1859 to 1863 the Hancock County Democrat tell us the Sheriff was busy with the problems developing between folks from Virginia , North Carolina, Kentucky and New England over the Civil War issues. There were shouting matches and fighting in the streets and those involved spent night in jail...The Civil War ended and the soldiers were returning home by 1865 and the County Sheriff still had to deal with brawls and unruly behavior by the residents. The Civil War still lingered with local residents...Last, rumor has it that one local family cared for a

Confederate soldier, the husband's brother, in their Greenfield home If discovered the family would have been charged with treason. The Sheriff bought all these small histories and you will need to contact Mike.

Enough. I have told you everything that I know and some things I don't. Talk to me.

2014-06-14

By Joe Skvarenina

Angela Hoffa and her husband recently purchased the Spencer home on North Pennsylvania Street behind Bradley Methodist Church and she shares with us a treasure trove of information. Before it was the Spencer house it was the home of Andrew Banks. In fact Mr. Banks died at the residence on October 7, 1912 at the age of 82. Mr. Bank was from Wayne County and came to Greenfield as a junior member of Banks, Wallace & Banks, general merchants. Mr. Banks put in the first exclusive line of hardware in Greenfield. He continued in the hardware and implement business until 1896 when he sold his stock of goods. Later he and his son Luman engaged in plumbing, furnaces, metal, and slate roofing. He was also purchased a farm northeast of the city and raised registered Polled Shorthorn cattle. For fifty four years Mr. Bank had been identified with the business of Hancock county and Greenfield. He was known for his honesty.

Bank's and his wife were the parents of six children. Andrew's daughter Viola was married to Newton Spencer. Newton Spencer and Viola Banks Spencer were the founders of the Daily Reporter in 1908. The Spencer publishing Company also issued the Weekly Republican. Newton's son Dale was a newspaper carrier in the early days. Later Dale B. Spencer and wife Dorothea Bruner Spencer ran the newspaper. The couple worked regular shifts in the Daily Reporter office. Eventually Dale was the publisher and son Richard B. Spencer became the editor. Spencer Publishing was purchased by Home Newspaper Enterprise. At that time of purchase the paper had a circulation of 6000 people.

Enough. I have told you everything that I know and some things I don't. Talk to me.

2014-06-07

By Joe Skvarenina

More on the Why Not Theater also later called the Riley. This is the current National Road Insurance Building. The building was built in 1919 on the east side of the courthouse square by the Why Not Corporation 42 1/2 by 100 feet in size. A movie called the "Greenfield Romance" was made to be shown in the new theater by Essanay Studio Chicago. Alice Farnsworth was played by Mildred Duncan; Tom Brown by Joseph Glasscock, while bad men from the gulch, bartender and bouncer, were Herman Jackson and Kenneth Millikan.

Chris Boggote writes Elijah Tyner was truly visionary and a inspiration for our own livestock Tyner Pond Farm? I am curious Chris how did you happen to choose that name?

Tom VanDuyn chaired a Hancock County Historical roundtable the other day about Green Township. Eden is the principle and probably only community still in existence in the Township. Did you know that Eden once called Lewisburg was surveyed and platted on August 21, 1835, probably by John Alford. The community originally had thirty lots. Many small stores were conducted in the town over the years. Orville Baity was an early merchant. Lee Justice and Umbenbower and Fuqua were merchants in later years. Rom Stamps provides us with a photo of Umbenbower's. One local, Ruthie O'Neal, writes "The Umbenbower's helped people in many ways...Harry converted his covered truck into a bus to haul kids to ball games, he stayed opened late so women and kids could visit by the big old stove in the back of the store until the came was out. In front of the store was a 'liars bench'. During fit weather it was in use all the time during the day and evening. "

Fred Pope bought the store from Mary Umbenbower in 1936. People would come from Anderson and Indianapolis for the meat and the hand packed ice cream. Jack Hite was the last owner of the store.

2014-05-31

By Joe Skvarenina

Rob Young from National Road Insurance writes," Today I was working on the third floor of my building, unused space for decades, likely vacant for over 60-70 years. My son dug up this old sack from the Tastie-Cream donut shop. Telephone number just 3 digits, 870. location was 133 W. Main St. This address would've placed it on the SE corner of Pennsylvania and Main, where Carquest Auto Parts sits now.

Do you have any info on this old donut shop? Perhaps someone would love to own this old history piece. I'm not selling it, but would give it to someone that would cherish it. Let me know.

Finally, after years of saving pennies, I had enough money to put a new roof on our office building, which had been springing many leaks! Patching was not doing the job. So, after close to 20k spent, we have a new roof. We've changed one previously boarded up window over to a roof access door, I just installed the door today. I also had to replace a window pane that a pidgeon shattered trying to fly through it. While I was up on the roof of the Harbor Building, I went ahead and unboarded another window that had been covered for decades. The old glass is still intact, and it's so nice to finally start getting a little light shining into my third floor....the 'crypt'. Why the west wall of my third floor was removed and replaced with ugly cinder block, removing all the third floor windows of my building, I fear is lost to old history. Nobody knows why. You and some others know why the south wall is fully covered with EFIS...a fiberglass covering made to look like stucco.

slowly but surely I am moving forward with restoration and renovation. I'll be replacing the arched transom over the window I just unboarded. It was 1/4 inch plywood, inferior material and left a huge gap for bugs and water to sneak inside.

Ultimately, I want the west wall third floor cinder blocks removed, and a retro restoration done there, a row of nice windows across the third floor, giving a nice panoramic view of courthouse square, and the close to 2000 sq ft up there being utilized."

Bob Thanks for the update. Contact Bob if you want the sack. Bob's building is the old "Why Not" Theater. It was one of three in the good old days. I believe it was called both the Why Not and the Riley Theater. The white strip on the outside gives you the original outline of the building. I do believe it operated until the late 1950's and was the leader until Weil Theater now Ricks was built in 1946. Also across from the Courthouse on the West side was the State Theater now McCleery's Sporting Goods. The projection booth is still upstairs at this site.

Enough. I have told you everything I know and some things I don't. Talk to me.

2014-05-24

By Joe Skvarenina

James Nolte, Vernon Township Trustee writes," I have been an actual resident of Fortville since 1980, so your topic caught my attention. We also were guilty of wishing we had pictures of the past, which was the case when INDOT demanded the removal of the subject sign, in order to revamp SR 238 several years ago. Time past and in an attempt to recapture history- I inquired to find that the sign was located in a barn in Dayton OH.for the past five years. Thanks to Paul Wilson, we retrieved the sign, and once here, I had the opportunity to read in full what was stated on the sign. The original location was misleading everyone to think the former Town was at Connecticut Rd crossing and SR238. I researched the actual location of Walpole and using Google Earth discovered that the 1 mile (north-south) referenced,was actually on my yard. The first two words of the sign read "-Vernon Township-" As Trustee of this Township, the sign is protected from future removal and it is correct where it stands. I hope this covers the concerns of those non residents of Vernon Township and presents an accurate locator of the truth stated on signs." Thank you Mr. Nolte.

One writer tells us that the County Farm Property was owned by the Bob Cox family in the 1980's and was passed down to them in the 1970's Bob's sister lived in the house at the time.

Ron Stamps remembers the old Texaco Station in Eden. Betty and Bob Tomlinson bought the station form Donald and Nola Rash in 1976. What do you remember about it?

Charlotte Slaughter and friend Lauralee Woods rode the bus from Charlottesville to the Riley Park Pool in Greenfield. They were probably in Junior High School. After swimming they would probably walk to the bus depot now Carols' Cafe and rode home. Charlotte also tells ," I also remember catching the bus in Charlottesville with my Aunt Elizabeth Shield Christie to go shopping in New Castle."

The Riley Park Pool which Charlotte Slaughter speaks was officially dedicated with an opening ceremony the morning of July 4, 1930. Bert Foster was the builder and William Bintz was the architect.. On Sunday July 6, 577 people used the facility. This pool was closed in 1970's and eventually demolished.

Enough. I have told you everything that I know and some things I don't. Talk tome.

2014-05-17

By Joe Skvarenina

The 1920's, 1930's, and 1940's were tough times in Hancock County and other areas of America. The American economy went rapidly downhill after 1929, the U.S. gross domestic product fell almost in half from 103.1 billion to 58 billion. Consumption dropped by 18 percent, construction by 78 percent and private investment by 88 percent. Nearly 9,000 banks closed their doors and 100,000 businesses failed. Corporate profits fell from 10 billion. Most telling, unemployment rose to 25 percent. Fifteen million people were out of work by 1933 and many who had jobs took wage cuts. "Hoover made a souphouse out of me" sang many jobless men.

People had to make a living anyway possible. One such individual was Bozo Meyers. Sue Edwards Baker shared with us the following story told by her father Horace Edwards. Bozo was not homeless but lived with his parents and a brother Paul in east Greenfield. Bozo's father was a day laborer in the early 1920's and was hired by the Edwards family to dig trenches for drainage tile on their farm located three miles north of Greenfield. The father was a good worker and walked to and from the farm until the digging was done. Bozo pushed a two-wheeled wooden cart which was his livelihood. He could and did put almost anything in that cart and hauling was his business.

Horace remembered two incidents in particular: on one occasion Bozo and his mother attended the service, properly attired, at the Greenfield Christian Church; Bozo often sang as he pushed his wooden cart up and down city street and if you listened carefully you heard the hymn, "When the Roll Is Called Up Yonder, I will be There."

Enough. I have told you everything that I know and some things I don't. Talk to me.

2014-05-10

By Joe Skvarenina

Phil Rihm writes "I am the step-son of Rhea Thomas Rihm, R Hp. who co-owned Thomas Drug Store with her father at the corner of Main and State streets in Greenfield until closing in 1973. She and her father, Fred Thomas, employed on a part-time basis, Charles F. Maxwell, R Hp. I believe Mr. Maxwell full-time employment was with Eli Lilly & Company, but I could be mistaken. I also believe he was killed in a farming accident, but again, I could be mistaken about that as well. I am writing, trying to locate any relatives of Mr. Maxwell to return his Indiana Board of Pharmacy license to his family. The license was issued for the years 1955 - 1956. I would appreciate hearing from any of your readers if they are able to help me locate any remaining family members. I can be reached by telephone at (317) 462-5406." Thank you." Please let Phil know if you have a chance to do so.

Early in April long time writer and genealogist Sue Baker passed away. She will be sorely missed by the community. I visited with her often and she was a great resource offering much encouragement and guidance. She knew her stuff and had written several books including her seminal work on the Jefferson Proving Ground along with Hancock County cemetery book, one on Civil War soldiers and the Edwards family history. Sue's maiden name was Edwards. I also authored a book with her and Elayne Stewart called Hancock County during the Civil War. She was a treasure and I was glad I got to visit her toward the end.

On Tuesday September 3, 1956, 23 cars of a west bound freight train, jumped the tracks of the Pennsylvania Railroad which was passing through Greenfield at 10:35 in the morning. The location was the crossing with East Street which is now American Legion Place. Four of the cars piled up in the crossing at Meek Street and two of the cars carrying chemicals burst into flames. The cars were in the middle of a 57 car train. After the first car the jumped the track the rest were torn and mangled by the cars following behind. It was two hours before the Greenfield Fire Department assisted by Shelbyville and Indianapolis could get the fire under control. Additional fire departments arrived from Rushville, Warren Township, Franklin Township, Washington Township and Mt. Comfort. Sue Baker local historian added a small tidbit to the story.

"My late in laws, Burt and Edna Baker, lived at 302 Meek Street at the time of the incident. The weather was warm, doors and the windows were open and being a block away, Edna heard the grinding crash as the Railroad cars left the track and began piling up in a heap. When she rushed outside the ear splitting noise had stopped but some of the huge wheels on the overturned boxcars were still spinning. Within an instant or two Edna heard the fire alarms whistle and the screech of sirens as police cars scurried to the Meek Street crossing. Thinking everything was under control she walked down the block back home and went about her chores.

Less than ten minutes later a Greenfield fireman was shouting to her through the front door, 'Get out quick. There could be an explosion any minute.!' What a statement! Edna was so startled that she ran out of the front door, raced south on Meek Street and never looked back until she got to Forest Avenue. By that time the acrid smell was overpowering.'

It was learned later that one of derailed tank cars carried a chemical the could have blown up a large part of Greenfield.

Enough. I have told you everything that I know and some things I don't. Talk to me.

2014-05-03

By Joe Skvarenina

Alma Myers writes, "Really enjoy your column. However, the old Brad's Phillips 66 station is now and has been for several years the location of Kenny Rea's Automotive Maintenance business and not Rick's Auto Body as Phil Samuels wrote." Thank you Alma. This would be the March 8-10 2014 edition

Doug Magers in New Castle send us information on the family of Weir Cook from Wilkinson. Cook was born in the town on June 30. 1892. He was a WW I flyer ace and had shot down seven German planes. He was a member of Captain Eddie Rickenbackers 94 th Aero Squardon. For his service he was awarded the distinguished flying cross and the French Croix de Guerre. Following WWI he became one of first airmail pilots and flew with the Army Corps until 1929. It was through his efforts that Indianapolis was included as an airline stop in the New York to St. Louis airmail route. Later Cook was the general manager for the Curtis-Wright in Indiana. Charles Lindbergh visited with Cook at Curtis Flying Headquarters at 957 N. Meridian Street. Cook was active with the promotion of flying with the youth at the time. He was one of the sponsors of the "Conquest for the Skies", a nationwide model airplane show. He organized the 'Flying Cadets Corps' and had a radio program on WLW Cincinnati during the 1930's. He taught many young men how to fly. He was a member of the American Legion Aeronautic Commission and was a frequent speaker to veterans and civic groups throughout the United States. He was assigned to the National Guard as an aviation instructor and was recalled in 1941. He was transferred to the Air Force in 1943. He died in a P-39 crash on March 24. 1943 at New Caledonia where he was in command of local American Air bases. Cook was too old for participation for WW II but he was sent to the Pacific and given a command. In 1944 the Indianapolis Airport was named Weir Cook. He is buried in the Punchbowl Cemetery in Hawaii.

LouAnne Myron and her husband came into the Library the other day to see me. She has her grandmother's Bessie Berryman's painting of the Old Swimming hole by Bixler. It is 8 1/2 by 11 and a signed piece of art and I have never seen one this size, It appears authentic and it is a real treasure. Thanks to the Myrons for sharing.

Enough, I have told you everything that I know and some things I don't. Talk to me.

2014-04-26

By Joe Skvarenina

Charles Thurston writes, "I'm looking for the cemetery and location of my Great grandfather Abraham Rouse. He was born 1816 in Boone Ky. He died March 1880 in Shelby Co. Indiana. His wife was Harriet Timberlake married 23 Aug. 1836 in Marion Co. In. Harriet is buried in Pleasant View Cemetery Shelby Co. She died 3 Mar. 1872. Oral history says Abraham may be buried in London cemetery but have no records of it. He is willing to exchange information on Shelby Co. Rouse's." If you can assist email chasgen@comcast.net.

Tubby Toms was an interesting character in Hancock County History. Mr. Lowell "Tubby" Toms wrote for the Indianapolis Journal and good old friend Doc . Hardin shares with us one of his columns about Westland.. John Howard was the owner of the Westland General Store. His son Ralph operated his father's huckster wagon into rural Hancock County. According to Toms "...was a time to awaited eagerly ...when Ralph and his huckster would appear and Mother would provide me with an egg then commercially equivalent of a penny, which in turn was a good for two sticks of candy or licorice. Somehow Ralph always managed to miscount and hand over three sticks of candy. It was a small wonder that the kids of Westland neighborhood both admired and loved this man. For the same penny one could buy 10 feet of linen cord strong enough to hold a pig, a single shot sinker and a wooden bobber. But to be perfectly sure the youthful purchaser might not have to abandon his angling through the loss of a hook, Ralph underwrote the bargain with two extra hooks gratis." There was a great deal of sorrow when later Ralph left Westland to become an attendant at the Indiana Boys School. In later life his career included superintendents of the Indiana Reformatory, the Sate Farm and the State Prison. He became an outstanding penologist produced right there in Westland.

Enough. I have told you everything that I know and some things I don't. Talk to me.

2014-04-19

By Joe Skvarenina

Tom Butler writes, "I saw an article on the web site regarding log cabins. Unfortunately, I live just over the county line in Marion County, but your article caught my attention. There is an old log cabin just off my back property line owned by an elderly man. I had approached him about the possibility of preserving it and maybe moving it onto my property. He told me it was associated with the Morehead family (as in General and Colonel) and is was moved here from Hamilton County. We had agreed to talk about the possibility when a huge tree fell on it. I'm curious if there are any resources available to do a fairly extensive rehab on such an historic structure. I don't have any idea where to start. Any help would be appreciated."

Any one have any suggestions for Tom? I know there are some loans available but I am not aware of anything else.

Did you see that Martha Beckenholdt had passed away. She was 98 years young. She did much for the Greenfield community. I had the opportunity to work with her because she was the Treasurer of the Hancock County Historical Society for many years and a supporter of Lutheran High School. It was Martha who facilitated the moving of the Log Jail in Riley Park. The Log Cabin had been at the time at the location of the Gas Company on South Street, Miss Beckenholdt came to Greenfield in 1941 when the Greenfield Gas Company was formed. She eventually became President. In 1968 that Company was sold to the Central Indiana Gas Company and she became Manager of the Greenfield Division. In 1973 Central Indiana Gas merged with Indiana Gas after which she retired in 1973.

The boom in the gas industry was from 1887-1915. Gas was discovered in Greenfield on May 3, 1887. The first well was on West Fifth Street. After the initial discovery 43 gas companies were discovered in Hancock County. In 1888 it was estimated that one in thousand men were employed in gas related jobs. Greenfield offered gas as an incentive for businesses to locate in Hancock County.

Bob Bernhard shares with us a map of the Trenton fields gas wells in Hancock County.

Enough. I have told you all that I know and some things I don't. Talk to me.

2014-04-12

By Joe Skvarenina

Jerry Duke President of the Shirley tell us, "Shirley residents are very excited to have a chance at a Railcar for display at the Shirley Depot Museum. The Railcar, a Caboose built in 1909 for the big 4 Railroad likely made many trips thru Shirley in its hey day. This Caboose is being made available to the town by Mr. Allison of the now closed Carthage, Knightstown, Shirley R.R. The Shirley Historical Society, Octagon House, Shirley Visionary Group, and the Shirley Town Hall, are all looking at ways to see the project gets the proper funding to go thru. \$500 has already been donated towards its purchase.

Phase One will include the purchase of the Caboose and rails and ties to display it on. It will also include transportation, and setup. Phase Two will be the restoration of the Caboose. The Shirley Historical Society is a 501(c)3 organization. Anyone wishing to donate towards the Caboose project can do so at the Shirley Hardware Store, or by mailing to S.H.S, PO Box 93, Shirley, In. 47384 Receipts for your taxes will be provided. For more information contact any of above groups. Jerry 317-294-5582 jerry@shirleyindiana.com."

If you are interested in assisting in the effort contact Jerry Duke.

The town named Shirley was named for a conductor on the railroad, John W. White came to Hancock county when the old National Road was laid out. John White owned the farm where most of Shirley was laid out. He cleared the land and rolled the logs and ditched most of the ground in the 1870's. He had also worked in the early 1860's to help prepare the site at Wilkinson. He lived most of his life within five miles of Shirley. Another fascinating individual of Shirley was William Trail. Mr. Trail was a runaway slave. Mistern Trail and Johnson owned a farm which became the west side of Shirley. Before the Panhandle Railroad was built through Knightstown in 1853 William Trail transported a load of wheat to Cincinnati which took him 5 to 7 days to make the trip. His great granddaughters taught school in Washington D.C. They were born on the farm in Shirley.

Enough. I have told you everything I know and some things I don't. Talk to me.

2014-03-29

By Joe Skvarenina

Kevin Ledgerwood writes," I have been trying to collect information on the old county farm that used to sit about 2.5 east of Greenfield on US40. I have found a few things like reports from the early 1900s but, have been unable to locate any pictures or any real details about what ever happened to it. I was hoping maybe you could help me with this project? Near as I can find it was shut down around 1959 and the building was not re-used until the early seventies. At that time a woman named Barbara Taylor worked on repairs of the old brick structure to house teens for the state. Later a Sheriff or some one put in a home for handicapped kids? Of course now the structure has been demolished and I have been unable to find any info on when or why. .'

Kevin, I am a little sketchy on it also. I know that it was torn down in the circa 1980's by the County Commissioners because of it condition. I do remember the building and I do believe that the county still owns the farm property. I know that the Sheriff currently has a shooting range at the site. So we are going to have to depend on the readers for additional information. The 1882 Binford history of Hancock County called the condition of the poor farm "dilapidated" and "inadequate". An 1883 County infirmary remedied that situation but some people though the poor should receive aid in their homes not public institutions. The children of paupers were bound out as apprentices so they wouldn't have to be cared for by the county. I do believe that the county had two buildings which were designated at different times as the county poor farm. or infirmity. At least that is how I read the old history books.

Also out by the property on the north side of 40 you see a large clump of trees in the middle of a field. I believe that is one of the pauper's cemeteries for the poor farm. If you walk into the wooded area and you wood see sunken grave areas but of course no tomb stones Mr. Kemmer who was lynched in the 1870's was buried at that site with the noose still around his neck.

Good friend Pastor Gary Wright want to know if anyone know the tale of Billie Goat hill in Shirley? It was over by the one time cheese factory.

Enough. I have told you everything that I know and some things I don't. Talk to me.

2014-03-22

By Joe Skvarenina

In mid November I had the opportunity to write about King's One Stop on Route 40 which is now Greenfield Lighting. Kings was in operation during the 1940's and 1950's as a fueling location and a convenience or General store and a Restaurant. Norma Jean Gibson from Florida writes, " Here are a few people who worked here in the late 1955 to early 1956. Charlie, Hope, Amelia, Ed, John, myself, my sister Symolene Gibson Anderson, Jewel and son Bob Glen, Norma Wood, and her mother Emily Wood, Thelma Herrell and George Chaplain. I was employed there almost a year. I rode the Central Swallow Bus from Greenfield to work every day on US 40 east of Gem." Thank for the memories, Norma Jean. Do any of you remember the Central Swallow Bus Lines? Norma Jean is my wife's cousin.

My grandmother used to tell me to stay away from the gypsies.' They kidnap children'. Gypsies were different folks, dark skinned wanders and unfortunately people were afraid of them because of it. Charlie White shares a 1931 newspaper clipping with us, "Fourteen automobiles loaded with gypsies arrived in Greenfield last night and stopped on Main Street. Chief of Police Wiggins immediately interviewed their leaders to find out their intentions. 'We are here only long enough to get something to eat and pay for it.' ...The officer directed them to eating places open and they soon cleaned them out of eats paying their bills without question. They were then directed by the officer's to move on and not stop until they reached the county line. This they did as Officer Wiggins followed the caravan to Charlottesville. The automobiles were nearly all big Cadillac's."

Rebecca Crow from the Fortville Library shares with us a wonderful panorama of Rail transportation in Fortville. Did you know that the Interurban Station (Union Traction Company) was located on Staat Street across from the Methodist Church and that the Big Four Train Depot was located on Noel Avenue. Also do you remember the Gate Tower that was located on Main Street and used to lower the gates at Railroad crossings? I am sure that these sites are gone now but probably not forgotten by many of you.

Barney Bewsey writes , " I own property of 300 West that was supposedly a recreational area in the day. The property is on the bordered on the east by Sugar Creek, the west by 300 W and the north by US 40 and on the south by the old Pennsy Railroad track bed. I tis labeled 99 S. 300 w. Greenfield...there are currently three buildings on the site and I had heard rumors there were as many as eleven with three structures remaining. I have observed several old foundations. Also there is an old cemetery, just to the south with some really old headstones. I am at a loss do any of you know about this property.

2014-03-08

BY Joe skvarenia

"I just finished reading your 1-11-14 article including, 'In 1932, Loren Martin... Everything is fine until you mentioned Weston Village'. Weston Village is on the West side of town, not the East side.

Brad's Phillips 66 Service Station was at the corner of East Main and Pratt Street (currently Rick's Auto Body...the last I knew). I grew up across the street from the Station at the corner of East Main and Vine Street. Pratt St. runs North. and Vine St. runs South. In the 1950's the Phillips 66 Station was run by Harold Bradbury (father of our past Sherriff, Jim). As I was growing up, the lot in back of the station was an empty weed lot, and my buddies and I would mow the weeds in the summer to make a baseball diamond and play baseball. Years earlier, there was in fact, a school building on that lot. The school was in a building that was called the Longfellow Building. That lot is bounded by East Main, Pratt, and North St. and an ally along the West side. (Currently, 2 apartment building are on the lot). My dad (James Samuels) went to school there as a kid for 2nd and 3rd grade. This would have been 1924 and 1925.

Also you mentioned a business and past muffler shop on the "Northwest" corner of Main and Pennsylvania St. That is the Bradley United Methodist Church. The muffler shop and other businesses you refer to, adjacent to the old movie theater was/is on the Northeast corner."

Phil you are right on both counts. Also Lorraine Clutinger. Richard Walker and Greg Murphy are also correct. It was the Bradbury station. Murphy adds that his father managed the Pure Oil in the 1950's and 1960's and his dad didn't mentioned Tourist Cabins. But what was the location of the Cabins?

The Longfellow School Building, 520 East main Street was at the site. The school was built in 1883 at a cost of \$5400. It was torn down in 1925. Until recently a portion of the wall around the lot remained. There are now apartments at the site. The teachers in 1915 and 1916 were Anna Jackson, Elizabeth Hanes, Kate Martin and Iduna Barrett.

Over the years the architectural style of schools have changed as well as cost. The Harris School named for Riley's etaher Lee O. Harris was built in 1954 at a cost of \$180,000. Imagine what it is today?

Enough. I have told you everything that I know and some things I don't. Talk to me.

2014-02-15

By Joe Skvarenina

Teresa Rivera writes." I very much enjoy your column. I moved here 2 years ago and noticed the barn on 300 North and fell in love with it! Could I possibly get contact information on the owner. I would love to have a print or scan of the barn. Or, you could pass on my contact information" We have written about the most popular barn in the county several times and when I have driven by I have noticed people painting it. By now Teresa I hope that you have made contact.

Walter Worland tells," when Jimmie Allen was Mayor of the City of Greenfield when the City Hall was built and the corner stone was built on the Northeast corner of the building on August 4, 1956...Cornerstones are placed upon request in most buildings to place the history of the county, businesses and churches. The White House and the Statue of Liberty have a cornerstone...In 1956 the Grand Lodge and the Grand Lodge Officers, Greenfield High School band and members marched from the Masonic Temple on Main Street and U.S. 40 to the City Hall location. Most everything in the box pertains to the history of the City of Greenfield." A cornerstone is an opportunity to observe what happen the previous 100 years.

The Greenfield City Hall of 1956 is at the site of the current Veterans Park.

What do you know about Tubby "Lowell" Toms? For forty years prior to his death on August 20, 1979 at the age of 72 he wrote a column for the Indianapolis news on Outdoor life. He was educated at Columbia University and DePauw University. He received his early education at Westland and Greenfield Schools. In addition he was named the newspaper man of the year by the Indianapolis Press Club and a Sagamore of the Wabash by Governor Harold Handley. He was the donor of Nameless Creek Youth Camp site in Blue River Township. He once wrote ," I wish every boy and girl could have the experience of living on Six Mile Creek.. I once caught a string of fish, cut a twig from a cottonwood tree, stuck in the ground and there hung a string of fish. I roamed and a turtle ate my fish, but that twig sprouted and today an 80 foot tree stands there near Carthage." I will be working on a history of Nameless Creek Youth Camp and Tubby Toms this years if any of you have anything to contribute I would appreciate it.

Enough. I have told you everything that I know and some things I don't. Talk to me.

2014-02-08

By Joe Skvarenina

Greg Murphy writes," I enjoyed reading your article about the Driffill family and the story about the plane that crashed north of Greenfield in 1942.

I remember my Grandma Murphy speaking of the Driffill family, specifically Minnie Driffill. Minnie was the daughter of David & Marion (Wilson) DeShong. Her mother, Marion Wilson, was a sister to my Gr. Gr. Grandmother, Mahala (Wilson) Murphy. According to the 1900 Vernon twp., Hancock, Indiana census, Charlie Driffill was a brother to Vivian's father, Frank Driffill, so Minnie and Charlie are Vivian's aunt and uncle. Having been raised in Mohawk, it would be interesting to know the location of the Driffill home in the picture.

In your story about the plane crash, you mention that the Army bomber crashed 3 miles north of Greenfield on the Charles Gant farm, across from Edgar Moore's Repair Station on CR 300N. On the northwest corner of State Road 9 and 300N was the location of the Boyd's school house. Do you happen to have a photo of the Boyd's school house of Lincoln Inn?

I am also looking for a photo of both. The Lincoln Inn which was located on west main street directly across from what is now the Citgo station. My father, Forest Murphy, owned and managed the Pure Oil Station (Citgo location) in the late 1950s and 1960s. I remember the Lincoln Inn as being a nice looking building, very attractive architecture. "

I don't have any photos of Boyd's School House or the Lincoln Inn. Do any of you? The Lincoln Inn was south side of 40 somewhat across from Weston Village Shopping Center. there was a car wash at the site that recently was torn down. Also when the car wash was at the site Gene McCarthy, Senator from Wisconsin, and a candidate for President of the United States gave a stump speech at the site. A guess the Lincoln Inn was a very popular local watering hole.

Do you remember the Iron Lady Bridge over the Blue River. This bridge was constructed in 1916 and is on the county line between Hancock and Rush counties. It was built with a cost of \$11,000 by Burk Construction of New Castle. It was one of the first all riveted bridge in the state and it was probably riveted at the site. The fabricators of the 1916 structure tucked a horse shoe between the lacing bars of the struts and it is still there. Barbara Norfleet from Cartage tells us that in September 2013 there were two weddings on the bridge. Perhaps the start of a new tradition. Enough. I have told you everything that I know and some things I don't. Talk to me.

2014-02-01

By Joe Skvarenina

Do you remember Picketts Hardware. You could virtually go in the store and find anything you could use or want, Sadly the old store is gone and has been taken over by Main Street Pizza which to their credit has preserved some of the historical ambiance . Charlie White provides us with some interesting facts on Picketts The Pickett Hardware Company came into existence in 1912 at 10 West Main Street and occupied that site for its entire history. In fact 10 West Main had always housed hardware stores, originally Wood , Pratt & Baldwin occupied the building. The in 1875 the firm became Pratt & Baldwin. Later, Baldwin & Carey, then in turn Baldwin & Son and Thomas & Sons who sold out to Donald and Roy Pickett. In 1916 M.M. Pickett became associated with his two brothers when they bought the of the stocks of two stores in Morristown and continued to manage branch stores at the Morristown site. Also in 1928 they acquired the stock of A.A. Gappen Sporting Goods, current site of Red Ribbons Antiques. Over the years Pickett's has handled Hoovers Vacuum Cleaners, The Perfection Stove, Nubian Hot Blast Heating , Aladdin lamps, newer electrical appliance like Haag Electric washer, Atwater Kent Radio, and Majestic Refrigerator.

It was in 1932 that the city of Greenfield purchased the Hagan Farm on South Nine for a Sewage Disposal Plant. The farm was 90 plus acres and was bought for \$63.50 per acre. The property would also be used for city dumping ground and extra lots for Park cemetery when it is needed. Until that time the pasture and farm land can be rented for \$200 a year with the wood on the property being cut for poor relief.

Dale Wagner found an old newspaper in his old farm house North 700 West in the McCordsville area which tells an interesting tale. It seems that in 1953 a will was filed in Chicago Probate Court which bequeathed the estate of Isaac Anderson Loeb to establish and operate the Loeb Farm School for Jewish Children in Hancock County. Loeb was a lawyer and had set aside \$711,000 for the purpose. Mr. Loeb was born in Anderson. According the codicil, "In the United States Jews have been successful in many endeavors: Art, Science, and Manufacturing. Only in farming have they failed." Does anyone no the location of this farm and was it ever started?

Enough. I have told you everything that I know and some things I don't. Talk to me.

2014-01-11

By Joe Skvarenina

Dianna Hoy from the Hancock County Library writes," While helping a patron with research on her family, I happened to look at the book, *The First Hundred Years in America: An Account of the Ostermeier/Buesking Family* by Jacqueline K. Johnson, pub. May 1979. It is in the Local History Room and has the designation GEN 929.2 O. It contains some very interesting information on the German immigrant community in Hancock County including letters from Germany to family members .On pages 9 and 10, the following information is provided on a log cabin owned by Sophia Ostermeier in Cumberland...

'She bought a small two-room log house a block north of the National Road and lived there until her death in the spring of 1891. Today that house, after a fashion, can still be seen. Located at 11825 Colmar Street, Agnes Oertel nee Buesking, lives in a modern house that literally was built around and onto the original two rooms of the log house. The original rooms are now used as the living room and front bedroom. This same house has been the setting for more events in our family than one might realize..." Ellen and Fredrick Buesking purchased the house in 1904 as a retirement home. Eleanor Johnson nee Reasner, was born at the house on February 17, 1917. Ellen and Fredrick both died at the house, in 1921 and 1936 respectively. The four Oertel children grew up there.' In another passage, it's stated that the log cabin was built originally in the 1870s.

The Ostermeiers were related to the Bueskings whose family farm is on 100 South, still owned by the Bueskings and is noted as a landmark homestead having been in the family for over 100 years."

Thanks to Dianna for the information Do any of you know anything about existing log homes in Hancock County?

In 1932 Loren Martin who operated the Phillips Service tation on East Main Street planned to construct Tourist Cabins on the property at the rear of the Station. Each would be equiped with a shower bath and a tiolet. Construction would begin in a week and this section of the city would be improved. According to Martin the ground was formerly occupied by an old school buidling which had been razed sveral years ago.

When I initially read this article I fought the site would have bbeen the old gas station at Weston Village. I believe the Pure Oil had some tourist cabins at this site. But the old school building puzzles me? Do you know the possible location of the cabins and Phillips Station? I don't believe there was a school building on the site at Weston.

Enough. I have told you everything that i know and some things I don't. Talk to me.

2014-01-04

By Joe Skvarenina

In February 1943 Col. Edwin P. Thayer passed away. Mr. Thayer served as Secretary of the United States Senate under Presidents Harding and Coolidge. He was the son of Hollis and Permelia Thayer early residents of Greenfield. He was married to Minnie Ridpath daughter of the distinguished historian John Ridpath head of the history department at DePauw University. He was a friend of Charles Dawes. Col. Thayer was Sergeant of Arms at four National Republican Conventions. The Colonel was a veteran of the Spanish American War. Mr. Thayer's chief business interest was with the Arizona Irrigation Project along with a partnership with his father in law in Hart's Merchandise. The Thayer's were active in the Bradley Methodist Episcopal Church.

Until 1945-46 this large block home often called the Thayer house occupied the north west corner of Main and Pennsylvania Streets. Many local social events took place at the site. The house was demolished for a new service station on the property. By the 1990's it became a muffler shop and no longer sold gasoline. Today the muffler shop is gone and the site anchors the downtown business district. it is directly west of the Ricks Theater.

Are all your crops in? 1840 corn was the largest crop in Hancock County followed by wheat and oats. Today it is corn and soybeans and possibly wheat. Swine was the most important livestock with sheep in cattle in the 1840's. Swine is still in the lead today. In the 1840's the county also produced buckwheat, hemp flax, tobacco and maple sugar which we don't see today.

I am currently working on four organizational histories including the Greenfield Seta, Hancock county Republican Party, Hancock County Boys and Girls Club and the Hancock County Sheriff's Department.. Do you have anything to contribute to the effort. Let me know.

Enough. I have told all that I know and some things. I don't. Talk to me.

2013-12-28

By Joe Skvarenina

Charlie White provides us with some very interesting stories from 1933. Do you know who was first buried in Park Cemetery? In 1933 the best evidence found it was a young man, 19 years old, and a son of William Sears who was the first adult. It seems that a baby brother passed away the same year of 1865. Mr. William Wishard who owned a shoe repair shop on Mount Street helped dig the grave. Mr. Wishard remembered it well for the undertaker cut notches in a stick showing the width length and depth for the grave. Also in 1933 the city park board found an artesian well flowing in a two inch stream in a small grove on the west side of Brandywine Park. The well was drilled by the city water employees and was pushed down a distance of seventy feet. I do believe that this is the city's current water supply. Last in 1933 chicken thieves were on the loose again southeast of Greenfield when Misters Price Scott and W.F. Thomas lost 150 fryers and hens to chicken thieves. Thanks Charlie.

The first person to die of record in Greenfield was Docia Spillman daughter of Benjamin Spillman who was one of the early settlers that helped lay out Greenfield. She died in 1828 and was the first person to be buried in the old cemetery on South Street. Many of the old graves are still there.

Do you know Richard Culver, he is the current Hancock county Circuit Court Judge. The first Circuit Court Judge was William Wick. In 1824 when Hancock County was part of Madison County; one group of nine Indians were peacefully camping on Fall Creek. Some white men cruelly killed the braves, squaws and children. The Fall Creek Massacre resulted in a trial where the whites were convicted of killing the Indians. This the first time that whites were convicted of killing Indians. The trial was held in a log courthouse at Pendleton. The Presiding Judge at the trial was William Wick. After being convicted some of the whites were some executed. Mr. Rambo and Isaac Roberts helped build the courthouse and John L. Garwood was on the jury. All three were from Hancock County.. Wick presided as Circuit Court Judge for four terms. he was also a Prosecuting Attorney in the Circuit and was eventually elected to Congress as a Democrat. He was appointed as Postmaster for Indianapolis by President Franklin Pierce.. Wick was a racist and feared blacks. He was a member of the American Colonization Society which supported blacks moving back to a Liberian Colony in Africa.

If you go to R Pendleton today there is a monument in Falls Park commemorating the event. It is on the north side by the old swimming area. Enough. I have told you everything that I know and some things I don't. Talk to me.

2013-12-21

By Joe Skvarenina

Merry Christmas. Here is a downtown scene in Greenfield. Probably the turn of the century or a little later. It is taken on the North side of the street notice the Gooding Tavern and the telephone polls. on the south side. The Gooding Tavern was located at the corner of State and Main Streets. In the 1920's the Tavern was demolished. The Gooding Tavern had many famous visitors including former President Martin Van Buren and Henry Clay. Joseph Chapman began the structure in 1832 with later additions being added by Asa Gooding. For many years Gooding's wife Matilda ran the early hotel. To the right was a depot for the Indianapolis, Greenfield Traction Lines Other famous Gooding's include David Gooding who was appointed as the United States Marshall for the District of Columbia from 1866 to 1869. he was wounded in Morgan's raid in Indiana. Another family member was Civil War General Paul Gooding who distinguished himself in the 1864 Red River campaign. It is interesting to note that George Knox leader of Greenfield African American community had a barber shop in the Gooding. Knox, a life long friend of James Whitcomb Riley moved to Indianapolis and had a barbershop in the Bates Hotel and published an early Negro (aka black) newspaper called the "Freeman." The Bates House was located at the current site of the Embassy Suites.

Norma House is looking for people willing to do genealogical research in Hancock County. You can contact her at houseno@aol.com.

Ron and Carol Stamps shares with is information about giant concrete arrows which were placed coast to coast by act of Congress on August 20, 1920 for the air mail service. it seems that navigation charts were poor so every 10 miles they would plant a concert arrow which would be bright yellow. They would be placed on a five foot tower and lit by a million candle power. Some of these arrows still exist in Northern Indiana. II know we had navigation light towers in the area also one would have been in Cumberland and the other by Kingdom Hall going into Knightstown.

Two items on a personal note. I was at the gas station with my wife the other day and realized I didn't have any cash or a credit card. I had begun pumping gas and so I was in a panic when I went inside to explain myself. I had gone out to get my plate number when the attendant came and told me a gentleman had paid for my gas. I thanked the guy but we wouldn't give me his name. Thank you again. Also one of best friend passed away, Donnie Neal, just recently. Donnie went on many of these historical adventures with me tacking down the facts. Donnie was a Hancock County original and did a lot for people. I will miss him. Condolences to Brenda, his girls, his beloved grandchild Elizabeth and brothers and sisters.

2013-12-14

By Joe Skvarenina

John King writes, "You may be interested in more information about King's One Stop.

In the early 1940's Charlie and Hope King began building on their 4-acre property on the south side of U.S. 40 between the towns of Gem and Philadelphia . First was a concrete-block 25 by 50-foot home. Following the house, was the gas station and then the restaurant—which together were called King's One Stop. All were built in the pioneer spirit with Charlie's and Hope's physical labor and that of friends. Their three children, Amelia, Ed, and John were all recruited to help staff the gas station and restaurant through the years. All went to New Palestine High School. Over time the business included a Crosby car dealership, a farm gas and home heating oil delivery service, and a furnace dealership. After a fire that Charlie and Hope fought for hours to put out one evening, Charlie was instrumental establishing a local volunteer fire department in the town of Philadelphia. The business prospered for over 20 years until Charlie was killed in the accident that occurred when turning into the driveway." Thanks John. King's One Stop is now Greenfield Lighting.

Was your old farm house built around a log cabin? I know when a fire burned the house Shambles in Cumberland they found the Estes cabin. When my wife Cheryl and I was driving on 500 North we discovered an old house being torn down and in the center there was a log cabin. This cabin had been moved once and the owners at the time build a house around the cabin. The family who arrived when we were looking said it was Grandma Kingen's cabin and when it was back by woods legend has it the Grandma shot Indians out of the doorway. I would be interested in more log cabin pictures and stories.

When Indiana became a state in 1816 Hancock County didn't exist and this area was Indian territory until the Treaty of St. Mary's in 1818. Early settlers took the Blue River into Blue River Township which was our first settled area. Hancock County initially was part of Madison county and there was some Indians traveling through the county at the time.

Not many log structures are still in existence in Hancock County. I know that Marsha Parker has a log smoke house on her property in New Palestine. Do you know about any log buildings?

Enough. I have told you all that I know and some things. I don't. Talk to me.

2013-12-07

By Joe Skvarenina

I had a delightful conversation with Vivian Drifill Kemper the other day and she shared information about her family history. Her mother Edith was a Stansbury. Father Frank Drifill was a retired farmer born in the McCordsville in 1897 and her mother Edith Stansbury Drifill was born in Mohawk in 1900. The cabin in the photo was probably in the Mohawk area and the family lived there before Vivian was born. Sisters Beulah and Elizabeth are pictured in the yard of the old home place. Father Frank Drifill was retired famer and lived in Hendricks, Shelby and Hancock Counties. According to the family legend Frank ran a grocery in Gwenville and traded it for a farm on the Carthage Pike. Gwenville is the highest point between Greenfield and Cincinnati. There were five children in the family with Beulah attended Mohawk School who died at a young age.

Today is Pearl Day. my dad was in the Navy during WW II in the Pacific. There were many men and women from Hancock County who served in the War. today we remember those brave souls who were at Pearl Harbor. The first two men to be inducted were Francis McNally the living in Brandywine Township and Billy Kemerly of Fortville. They volunteer and were inducted through the Hancock County Selective Service Board November 19, 1940. McNally saw service in the European area and Kemerly in the Pacific area. Myron Eastes of Buck Creek township volunteered at the same time but his application was not received until a later date. He was inducted into the second call of men January 31, 1941.

On March 20, 1942 the war was brought home to Hancock County people when an army bomber crashed on the Charles Gant Farm three miles north of Greenfield.. None of the four crew members were injured. The plane crashed through the trees and was torn to bits when it struck the ground. The flight was going to Wright Paterson in Dayton when the plane developed trouble in the gas feed mechanism. The location of this crash was the field across from Edgar Moore's Repair Station on 300 North. I have been told that the debris was all over and some can still be found today.

Last Hancock and Marion County residents did think of the War often and Cumberland residents built a spotter tower on the edge of town to warn of possible air raids.

Enough. I have told you all that I know and some things I don't. Talk to me.

2013-12-01

By Joe Skvarenina

Jeff Baker shares with us a 1979 Greenfield City Directory. Do you remember 1979? It tells us that the population in those days was 11,500 for the city and 40,394 for the county. Some of the business in the community in those days included the New Palestine Bank, the ranch Super Market, Town and Country Motel, Henry County Savings and Loan, the White House Restaurant, the Brandywine Steak House, Burkett Shell and Jolly Ken Service Company just to name a few. Many of these establishments have disappeared and some are under new names. I am sure that you can remember others. it also tells that in 1850 the town of Greenfield was incorporated and in 1976 it became a city. The year 1877 brought the greatest single period of growth to Greenfield was the discovery of natural gas. Industries sprang up because of the low cost of fuel. During this period there were town window glass plants, a fruit jar factory, a rolling and jail mill, two chair factories, a creamery, a foundry, a saw mill, a gas engine shop. three printing and bindery plants, one ice factory in addition to the municipal Light and water plants.

Also the first steam engine was completed in 1852 by the Indiana Central railroad Company and in 1899 the first electric interurban was completed connecting Greenfield and Indianapolis. In 1921 the National Road was first covered with gravel and in 1921 it was paved to Indianapolis.

Local Vet John Hardin tells some more about the early pioneer road the Napoleon Trace. It believes the old pioneer road 700 North today in the vicinity of Westland Friends in Blue River Township. A Trace is a path made by animals and used by Indians later. They were eventually widened and used by early settlers as roads. The Napoleon Trace was the first road in the county. Do you know anything about it?

Enough. I have told you everything I know and some things I don't. Talk to me.

2013-11-30

By Joe Skvarenina

Joan Thomas writes, "I have a couple of ideas of who the lady could be in the Frontier Days Photo. I believe there was a lady who worked with Ima Dean Amos in the dress shop. It could be her or could it be Ann Adams? Ann Adams was a friend of all those ladies. Also, the girl in the picture is me. My name was Joan Flatter. My mom was Glenna Mae Flatter. I have an older sister named Judy and that is probably where Mr. Johnson got that name. Also, I still have the dress and the doll I was wearing in the photo. I do have another question. Was it called Frontier Days or Old Fashioned Days? Maybe to explain it to a child, I was told it was Old Fashioned Days. Also, I think that same year or the next they had a Hula Hoop contest on the courthouse square." It was called Frontier Days!

More about King's One Stop...My wife and her cousin Nancy tells me her Aunt and Nancy's mother Jewel Glenn worked at King's One Stop and Jewel's son Bobby worked at the gas station at the site. In fact Bobby met his wife Amelia at the store. King's One stop was on 40 at the current location of Greenfield Lighting.

The 1930's must have been interesting times in Greenfield. In 1933 one newspaper story tells , "C.W, Moncrief ia asking that the chicken thieves not call at their home for a third time...During the last few nights the Moncrief's have lost eighty seven chickens in three visits...or during the same year Kinder's Restaurant, 103 West Main, offered lunches for 20 cents and dinners for 25 cents. The menu incuded roast pork, roast beef, meat loaf and chicken dumplings. It was also in 1933 that the emergency farm bill took effect and enabled the Secretary of Agriculture to lease land and take it out of production in order to increase prices, In addition the Drys of Hancock County were called together for a mass meeting in the Memorial Building by Ernst Warrum of Green Township, Chairman of the movement.They were in favor of retaining the 18th Ammendment and were interested in having Hancock County candidates on the state ticket. Also State Route Nine from Greenfield to Shelbyville was paved for the first time.Last in 1933 Daisy Douglas Barr of Indianapolis,former Friends minsister in Greenfield reported the theft of a \$2000 diamond ring to city police. Barr was the head of the women's division of the KKK.

The Westland School cornerstone soon will be placed at the Hancock County Historical Society Museum's complex. A major fire hit Westland School in 1947 and destroyed the building. After that Blue River and Jackson Township consolidated their schools. I am glad to see it has been preserved

oh yes, Brad DeReamer was the mayor of Greenfield before Pasco. Sorry for the error. Enough. I have told you everything that I know and some things I don't. Talk to me.

2013-11-23

By Joe Skvarenina

Ron and Carol Stamps writes about Kingry Mill which is mentioned in a Riley poem be the same name. They were wondering about the location of the mill? Kingry's Mill", verses 1-2, James Whitcomb Riley, from The Complete Poetical Works Of...,1937 says...

"On old Brandywine—about where White's Lots is now laid out,
And the old crick narries down to the ditch that splits the town—
Kingry's Mill stood. Hardly see where the old dam ust to be;
Shallor, long, dry tought o' grass where the old race ust to pass!

That's be'n forty years ago—forty years o' frost and snow—
Forty years o' shade and shine sence them boyhood-days o' mine!
All the old landmarks o' town changed about, er rotted down!
Where's the Tanyard? Where's the Still? Tell me where's old Kingry's Mill?"

Ron and Carol wants to know if any one knows the location of Kingry Mill? In response Miriam Shoaff-Rolles, President Abstract Shack writes...I am one who who loves a riddle...not sure about White's lots being laid out. Miriam's adds I checked into the location where Pott's Ditch meets the Brandywine Creek. I believe that is the location of Kingry's Mill. Miriam goes on to tell, I looked at the ariel of the property...It looks as if the there could be something in the shape of a mill laying on the side...The chain of title goes back to December 8, 1880. It was owned by Nelson Bradley who acquired the property from William H. Thompson, a one time Hancock County sheriff.

Can any of you confirm this as the location of an old mill? I am including a post card photo of Helm's Mill from the Fortville area 1892. This will give you an idea what a mill looked like,

Enough. I have told you everything that i know and some things I don't Talk to me.

2013-10-05

Brittaney Perry writes, "I grew up in a very old home in Greenfield and my mother and I were wondering about the history of the house and the original building date. I have actually moved to Scott County Indiana, so I have been going through the internet and I cannot find anything on the home. I know it is very old though."

One story Brittaney tells us, "is from when I was little: my dad was trying to fix some pipes, and he lifted the floor. The original floor is old wood, none of it fits together or anything..anyway, there were old newspapers that were stuffed into the floors and walls as insulation. The only one that we could read without it falling into pieces was one about the war of 1812. And the amazing thing about that, was that it was actually about an ancestor's to my mother's side of the family, Oliver Hazard Perry! We also took a metal detector through the yard before and found an old silver spoon and plenty of really old coins. All the doors only open with a skeleton key as well. It's a very unique home. There was even an extremely old mantel inside the house, I think it was dated 1864..."The address house is 12 West Junction Street in Greenfield. Does anyone know anything about this house? I doubt if it dates to 1812 but 1865 maybe. If you are looking for information about your property. I suggest that you visit the County Recorder of the Auditor's office. By those records you can probably tell what went on with a property. and establish some names associated with the property.

Barbara Norfleet writes, "We live on 500S east of 800E in Blue River Township. in Hancock County. We moved there in 1972...She goes on to add the "Iron Lady" is still on County Line south of Hancock County 500S. Another iron bridge existed less than one mile north of the "Iron Lady" on the County Line Road. It was there when we moved to the location in 1972 and I don't know when it was dismantled." Barbara tells, " The grandkids and I love to go walking down to the bridge. We go underneath when the water is down. You should see their faces when a vehicle goes across the bridge. But they always want to go back..." Thanks Barbara there is still another Iron Bridge in Hancock County and it is in Brown Township.

Charlie White shares with us information about the County Fair that was in the July 17, 1957 Daily Reporter. It seems there was a dump at the 4-H Fairground north of Riley Park which was closed on July 20th until after the Fair. This according to the article "enable the conditions at the new fair grounds to be as pleasant as possible during fair week." I didn't know that there was a dump in that area? I know the old city dump was by the FOP on Davis Road. The county's first agricultural society was organized June 1835 at the Hancock County Courthouse. But the first agricultural society of which we have a definite history was organized in 1856 for the purpose of conducting county fairs. The first county fair was held in Greenfield in 1856 at the east end of town north of the National Road. In 1857 the fair was held on the south side of the railroad tracks near Brandywine Creek on land belonging to Samuel Milroy. A fire destroyed the floral Hall in 1871. The hall was never rebuilt. The last fair at this site was held in 1879 at this location. On December 21, 1885 Boyd's Grove north of Greenfield. This is the current hospital property.

Enough. I have told you everything that I know and some things I don't. Talk to me.

2013-09-28

By Joe Skvarenina

I am writing a political history of politics in Hancock County. I have been able to find some interesting information. Up until 1962 this county went to the Democrats. in fact the local Democrats in November 1962 won every major county office. Led by Sheriff, Edwin Kirkpatrick democrats elected included George J. Lewis prosecutor, Max Jones clerk, Doyle Thomas auditor, Barbara Gilson recorder, Robert Rodocker assessor and Cletus Barnhart, Fred Bullman commissioners. But it was November 5, 1963 that things changed when Republican Berry Hurley defeated incumbent Greenfield Mayor Clifford O. Fields by a 37 vote margin. Hurley received 1618 votes to 1581 for Fields. Lone Democrat to be elected in the Republican sweep was Walter P. Worland. He was elected to his third term as s councilman. Does anyone have any Frank Gosset stories? He was known as a early republican organizer.

Here are a number of political firsts. The first woman elected to office in Hancock County was Hancock County Recorder Hazel Thompson in 1926. She was a Democrat. The first woman Clerk of Court elected in 1966 was Republican Pat Elmore. In addition Republican Elmore was the first woman to be elected as Mayor of Greenfield. First woman elected Auditor was Republican Irene Kramer. Republican Ruth Harper, Assessor served the longest from 1966 to 1990.

Ray Richardson provides us with the attached photo of the Republican candidates in 1966. From left to right they are running for: Ruth Harper, Assessor. Jim Ward, Commissioner; Pat Elmore County Clerk; Al Helms, State Senator; Ray Richardson, State Representative; Charlie Rutledge, Sheriff; Bernice Hughes, Center Township Trustee; Ken McDermott, Prosecutor and Pete Updegrove, Auditor. Do you remember any of them?

Enough. I have told you all that I know and some things I don't. Talk to me.

2013-09-21

By Joe Skvarenina

Bob Shivley writes, " I just read your article "Comic books a welcome detour". Phil Samuels and I were in the same grade and went to school in Greenfield together for 12 years. He referred to my Dad and Mom's grocery, Bob and Betty Lou Shively. I'm his first son, Robert Shively II. Everyone back then knew me as "Bobby". Yes, the grocery and meat market was just across the alley from Mr. Lucien Heim's Shoe Repair Shop. I spent many hours there just reading the comics and once in a while trading some. Mr. Heim's wife, Imogene, worked as a cashier in our store for many years. The grocery had various names over the years, Shively's Grocery, Shively's Meat Market, and then after we remodeled with the help of Mr. Payne ,my elementary school principal, it was called Shively's Superette. My Dad and Mom bought the grocery in 1955 when I was in the 5th grade and had to transfer from Riley School to Harris Elementary. My Dad had worked for my Grandfather, Jesse Shively, before they bought the store. My grandfather was the owner of Shively's Dairy on West South Street. It was located behind a two story house where my Grandmother and Grandfather lived. My Dad and Mom lived next door at 567 W. South St. My Grandfather opened the dairy in the late 1930's when they moved from North Manchester, IN where Jesse and his brother Bill owned Shively's Dairy in North Manchester. My Dad had the milk route north of Greenfield, where he delivered milk to Fortville and that area. I remember going with him on his route. There were small insulated boxes with a lid on the porch where customers would place their empty quart and pint bottles along with their order for the day and their money. We would stop at each house, pick up the empties, leave their order and take the money. My Dad worked in the dairy with three of his brothers, Ed, Len and Dick. His fourth brother, my Uncle Gerald owned a dairy farm with Holstein cows south of Greenfield off Hwy 9 on East 300 S. My Grandfather Jesse sold the dairy in the early 1950s to Meadow Gold, who stopped the dairy production and just used the plant for storage.' Thanks to Bob Shively for the interesting story.

My adolescence was in the 1950's and I can remember the home deliveries by the milk and bread man. Do you?

We boys would follow the milk truck around and ask for large chips of very cold and clear ice in the summer time. We would enjoy chewing on this ice and it was so cold you needed some thing to put on your hands in order to hold it. I don't know when those home deliveries of these home staples ceased but this does bring back fond memories.

Enough. I have told you every think thatI know and some things I don't. Talk to me.

2013-09-14

By Joe Skvarenina

Ok, the Moongrief's are correct the house originally pictured in the original April 14 article is theirs and the correct address for the historic photo is 328 North Street. Thanks to Kevin Hudziak and Becky Bernhard for correcting me in the error on my ways. Becky also goes on to tell us that the house in which she lives on West North Street was at one time the Baldwin's sisters house. What do you know about the Baldwin sisters?

In the 1930's the Baldwin's were the "brain trust" of Greenfield. Vernie Baldwin ran the library. Margaret was the principal of the grade school and Nellie taught. A fourth sister was married to Ethel Houk and lived in the Toledo area. They resided together at 210 West Main Street. Vernie promoted library programs that expanded the literary circles of Greenfield to the point that almost every woman of her time had joined a literary club. Margaret became known as one of the first women to lead a school in the county's history. Nellie Baldwin was the adventurer of the group. She volunteered for World War I along with the guys but not in the army. She served in the Red Cross in Paris on the front lines of the WW I. Nellie later returned to Greenfield to instruct generations of students in classical studies and Latin.

Another WW I adventurer was Tom Black. and his family home was at the corner of East Douglas and Spring Streets. It's the house with the huge tree in side yard. This tree is probably the largest in the county. During WW I Tom Black also worked for the Red Cross and after the war he traveled across Algeria, Morocco, Mexico and Cuba. He died in 1976 and his obituary list him as Red Cross worker, world traveler, author, linguist and historian. He spoke nine language fluently including French, Russian, German and Arab. Tom had a dog named Oyo, which is a nickname of a Greek god, who understood only French. Mr. Black was active in the Hancock County Historical Society.

Enough. I have told everything that I know and some things I don't. Talk to me.

2013-09-07

By Joe Skvarenina

Frederick's Polley's drawing , "Side Street in Greenfield " appeared in the Indianapolis Star in 1928. The descriptions say that the drawing was made on east South Street, near the stock yards, showing the blacksmith shop. the Methodist Protestant Church, with a little of the jail, and the Court House Tower rising above in the background. The Methodist Protestant Church was located at the site of the current Veterans Park so the church would have been before Bradley Methodist had been built. Has anyone ever seen this drawing? It would really give us an early picture of Greenfield.

Good friend and fellow historian Sue Baker has written a family history of her clan the Edwards, Asher, Canvaness and the Thomas families. In her epilogue to the text she writes, "After reading the exploits, facts, and fancies of our variegated ancestors, we now should have an enriched insight of who we are and where we came from..." She goes on to tell, " I have studied countless hours to examine and determine the use of primary evidence, secondary evidence plus devouring untold history book pages of the areas which our ancestors traveled and lived...After digesting these pages and pictures--who do your most look like? Who do your most identify with? Whose story do you like the best have different versions of the stories I have told, by all means, add them. Remember, if for people saw the same story-there would be four different versions...None of them wrong only different." I share this with you because I believe her epilogue is a great definition of history or the writing of history.

Sue Baker's father and mother was Horace Leo Edwards and Leona May Schneider. Mr. Edwards operated a dry cleaning establishment in Greenfield for many years. in the beginning Sue's ad worked fro Parish Cleaners and he was first in line when Mr. Parish decided to sell in 1930. The establishment was located at 16 North state Street at the time. Sue goes on to tell us , " those were the days of natural fibers, gabardine, serge, wool, cotton and a tropical material called palm beach which all wrinkled with each wearing. During the lean years of the Depression, men often had only one suit and being well-dressed required a knife-sharp crease in the trousers. There was a dressing room in the shop where men would wait while Horace pressed their pants. Sue, thanks for sharing!

Enough. I have told you everything that I know and some things I don't. Talk to me.

2013-08-31

By Joe Skvarenina

Marie Ferguson want to know about the Grand Hotel which is currently part of the Riley Emporium area, The upstairs would have been the rented bedrooms. I know that a picture is painted on the far west hall would have been the restaurant area. I find one newspaper account says that, "May Roberts a circus performer was robbed at the Grand Hotel. Upon awakening, the show people reported \$40.00 had been stolen as they slept." Does anyone know anything about the Grand Hotel?

Have you been to the Veterans Park yet? It is located at the city of the old city Hall. It is really impressive and you should take the opportunity to visit it. I was there this spring at a Veterans Remembrance Ceremony for Hancock County 40&8 Voiture Locale 1415 in Greenfield. During the ceremony Jim Repar and Bob Montrose were recognized for their years of service to this organization. This organization has its roots in WW I. Hancock County. Hancock County had a proud tradition of service of the wars to end all wars. In 1917 Roy McKelvey and Russell Abbott were the first Hancock boys to be called up for service.

Their fellow postal employees held a reception and banquet at the Columbia Hotel which according to the newspaper attracted a "jolly good crowd". The postal employees attended to a man to honor the departing boys from their department.

On September 21, 1917 citizens of the county turned out en masse to see the boys depart from the Pennsylvania depot.

A parade from the court house to the railroad station included escorts from the G.A.R., Boy Scouts and the Red Cross. Scholl was dismissed so the children could watch the parade. Harry Strickland was parade marshal and he was assisted by Omer Jackson who was local President of the Council of Defense.

It was later in 1917 when residents of Hancock County saw a different aspect of war preparation. Food control began on November 1, sixty five foods being on the ration list, all of them being important to the housewife from meat to fresh eggs to fresh fruits and vegetables. It was hoped to 'keep the extortioner and other offenders' out of business.

Enough. I have told you everything that I know and some things I don't. Talk to me.

2013-08-24

By Joe Skvarenina

Everyone asks me about the barn on 300 North. I it seems to be built of cement block and there is a big no trespassing sign on the fence. Lou Vinning was just one of a number of people inquiring so what do you know about the barn?

Sue Baker reminds me about W.A. Bixler who painted 5,000 oils of "The Old Swimmin Hole" during the 1918 promotion to raise money for the Riley statue in front of the Hancock County Court house. The statue was sculptured by Myra Reynolds Richards of Indianapolis. it is interesting to note that another work of Richard's is at the Riley Home in Lockerbie. When our statue was dedicated a parade was held of school children marching to the courthouse. Honored speakers of the day included Dr. William Lowe Bryan, President of Indiana University, Mayor Ora Myers of Greenfield, Judge Jonas Walker and William Hough the poet's cousin. If you want to see the painting there is a copy at the local history room at the Hancock Public Library.

Mr. Bixler claimed he painted "The Old Swimmin Hole" in about ten minutes and just after a couple of weeks of starting art lessons in 1912. He tells that he kept right on painting the same subject and he estimated he covered about 3,000,000 square inches of canvass with the Riley theme. The demand was so great at one point he sat up a studio at Thomas Drug Store at the corner of State and Main. People who came by bought his painting fresh off the easel. The original first painting was given to John Mitchell who displayed it downtown. Eventually the first canvass was given to Mr. Riley, who approved of the depiction of the site but never indicating if it was the exact spot. Later the daughter of the artist, Lucille Bixler Towers, visited the Riley Old Home. On the visit Lucille told Riley visited her family in Anderson and gave to each of the Bixler children a different book of his poems. The one he gave Lucille was "That Old Sweetheart of Mine."

Enough. I have told you everything I know and soem things I don't. Talk to me.

2013-08-10

By Joe Skvarenina

Curt Schrieber provides us with information from his mother, Mrs. Jerri Pyles. She writes, a few weeks ago in your local history column for the Daily Reporter you requested information on String town for Charlie White. Mr parents Caitl and Velma Ring, owned from 1956 to 1961. It was in a building located on the southeast corner of CR 500 East and US 40. It was called Ring's Market and Grill. It included a grocery store on one side and a small snack bar of the other side. There was also a single gas pump out front. Mr.Ring had partitioned off a part of the back of the building and it was used as the family residence during the time the family operated the store. Today Ring's is the used furniture store.

Before the Ring's opened the store in Stringtown they owned and operated two restaurants in Greenfield. One was called the 'Cozy Corner' and was located in a two story building that was later torn down on the west side of South Pennsylvania just south of Main Street. This would have been in the area small beauty shop is now located. The other restaurant they owned and operated was the 'White House Restaurant' and it was located in a two story building which was later torn down located on West Main Street which would have been the current parking lot of the 'Riley House Restaurant' In both locations they operated the business in the downstairs part of the building and lived upstairs.

In 1961 when my parents sold the business in 1961, they stayed in Stringtown and moved to a large house on the south side of US 40 just a few properties west of the store. My mother passed away in 1964 and my dad retired from Hygrade Meat Packing Plant in Indianapolis. After that Dad sold the house in Stringtown and moved to Marion Indiana.

I have include a picture of me standing in front of the family's business in Stringtown.

Do you know that Greenfield had an Abattoir in 1957. It was locate on South Park and in July 1957 they sold fresh Michigan Strawberries, Black Cherries and Raspberries. Charlie White provide us with the ad which describes the sale.The site is the current location of an auto repair shop. Does any one know what an Abattoir is?

Enough. I have told you everything that I know and some things I don't. Talk to me.

2013-08-03

By Joe Skvarenina

Bob Young and Greg Cross provide me with this post card view. Does anyone know about 'King's One Stop" RR 4 in Greenfield? Can you help locate it and what is on the site now? That's a new one to me.

In 1951 a tribe of South Carolina Cherokee Indians rented a race track south of Greenfield for a camp site. The track was located on State Route 9 and three miles south of town and it was owned at the time by D.L. Leary. It was on 300 South.

The tribe traveled here in 25 automobiles and 17 house trailers. Leary agreed to allow the tribe to give an Indian dance and provide a pig for a roast. Leary was reluctant to provide the pig because of the high price of pork.

But the appearance of the Indian tribe brought back to many the local legend which originated in 1890 about a search for a pot of gold in the beech grove adjacent to the race track. In 1905 a group of Indians accompanied by a cowboy camped the same site. Some say they found the pot of gold and others say they didn't.

Older residents of the area at that time did verify the fact that strange markings on the large beech trees include some arrows cut into the bark. Local legend says there is a pot of gold hidden under a rock which could have been located by using the marked trees if you were able to interpret the markings. Locals have not been able to find the rock.

It was reported that the band of Cherokee Indians left unexpectedly with no forwarding address. Thanks to Charlie White for the story.

Enough. I have told you everything that I know and some things i don't. Talk to me.

2013-07-27

I had the opportunity the other day to talk to Don Myers former President of the New Palestine Bank which was purchased by the Fifth Third Bancorp in 1989 and thus became a branch of Fifth Third. Don had some interesting history to tell and I thank him for the information.

It seems that the first bank in New Palestine opened for business in 1892 in the southeast corner of Main and Bittner Streets. In 1893 it moved to the North side of Main Street where the masonic Lodge stands. It closed its doors in 1895 due to the withdrawal of one of the partners or owners.

In 1897 banking came back when New Palestine Bank was opened for business in the southeast corner of Main and Bittner Streets. You can see the photo of this building. A drug store was in the west half of the building and the bank was in the east half. Five men established this bank and those owners pledged their own assets as security for loss. There was no FDIC in those days to guarantee your savings. In 1915 the bank bought the building they were in and installed a vault the same year. Prior to this the bank kept their liquid assets in a steel safe. During all the years the bank occupied the building there was no restrooms in the building. The employees either had to go across the street to the Shell Station or one of the houses in the neighborhood. At lunch time they simply closed the door and went next door to the restaurant which eventually became the famous Bonnie's.

Don tells one really great story, "A number of years later a black bag similar to a doctor's bag was found in the bank. Inside the bag was an old pistol. Inquiries disclosed that when the bank got low on cash back in the 1920's, Benjamin Faut one of the bank's officers would ride the interurban to Indianapolis with the bag and pistol in hand. He would go to Indiana National Bank at the corner of Virginia and Washington Streets, load up with cash, and return on the interurban..."

Don also tells, "In 1925 the Greenfield Daily Reporter carried an article concerning a robbery of the New Palestine Bank. It seems some men from New Palestine apprehended the suspect robbers at Gem Road and called Sheriff Comstock to come arrest them. Apparently several iron bars over the rear window of the bank had been sawed through and tracks in the snow were made by a man wearing rubber boots. A suspect was caught with boots matching those tracks. No mention was made of the amount of money taken...In 1956 New Palestine Bank moved into a new building on the corner of Bittner and Walnut Streets behind the Shell Station...On February 27, 1961, the bank was robbed of \$5,815 by a gunman who forced Mrs. Vivian Fetty, Assistant Cashier to hand over the money by threatening her with a .22 caliber pistol. This occurred in the middle of a snow storm that made travel into or out of New Palestine almost impossible. No suspects were ever found..."

Do you like grandkids. I do and I have six of them. Grandkids is what you get when you don't "do in" your kids. In the recent weeks I went to a concert for Zane at Mt. Vernon, a play for Max and Jake in Irvington and a baseball game for Brayden in Philadelphia. I would encourage you to participate in your grandkids activities. Do it before it's history.

Enough. I have told you everything that I know and some things I don't. Talk to me.

2013-07-20

By Joe Skvarenina

Holly Trees Miller writes" I read an article about iron bridges a week or so ago. I believe I am correct it stating there are two Iron Bridges still in use in the county- The one over Blue River down in Blue River Township and the one in Brown Township, over Sugar Creek. It was restored in 2006. It is located on 675 E , N. of 950 N. This is North of Willow Branch." Holly you are right. I forgot about that one.

Dennis Whitson writes and would like to know the location of the iron bridge in Blue River Township. I forgot to give the location. It is 900 East at Blue River. Now you folks have two places to find.

I was out at Nameless Creek Camp the other day and the place looks great. Congratulations to Jerry Bell and his crew for all their efforts. By the way to the north of the Nameless Creek property is a cabin owned by Mark and Chris Lee of Mozzi's fame which Lowell "Tubby" Toms built and was originally part of the Nameless Creek property, I am told that the fireplace built by naturalist Toms has a stone from each county in Indiana.

Gene Addison is interested in seeing a photo of the Wilkinson Bank. Do any of you have one to share? The building is currently Susie's Pizza and I am sure that they store their supplies in the old vault. It was called the Famers National Bank and it was organized November 21, 1908. It first President was George W. Sowerwine. At the one time the Bank's capital and surplus was \$35,000. The pizza shop used to be called CC's and was owned by the Carlton family now gone but wonderful people. Mr. Carlton was Wilkinson Town Board President for years.

Also did you know the Post Office in Wilkinson was at one time the Warrington Post Office and it was moved to the site.

Enough. I have told all that I know and some things I don't. Talk to me.

2013-07-13

By Joe Skvarenina

Do you remember Vic DeMarco the shoe repair man who had a shop at 20 State Street. I know I used to go to him to get my dress shoes repaired in the days when you could repair dress shoes? Roger Hall and I spent an afternoon reminiscing about Vic and his wife Vica just recently. According to Hall,

" Vic moved to Oklahoma after Greenfield but was unaware of his death until I found an obit.

It appears his wife, Vi, passed first in April, 2002 and Vic passed only 5 months later in August. They were extremely close and I believe he simply lost his will to live when she was no longer with him."

Vic was a WW II army veteran and served until discharged in 1945. After the service he and his wife operated shoe repair shops across several states. In 1987 after 50 years in the shoe repair business he and his wife retired to Duncan Oklahoma.

When In Greenfield he and his wife lived in an apartment above the shop. Vic liked to talk so it was a good to have an apartment above the shop because he had to work late at night to make up for lost time during the day.

After Vic fixed your shoes he would always polish them up getting the old shoes to look like new. Don Hiatt took over Vic's Shoe Shop after he retired. Later Jerry Shaw took it over and moved the location to Green Meadows. Eventually the shop moved near to Miller Jewelry and Don Clemens is the proprietor. This was about 1994.

Does anyone remember the Lucien Heim Shoe Repair Shop at 427 E Douglas Street? It was opened up after WW II. This shop had seating with comic books. In fact you had to leave two comic books for everyone that you took. So trading comics was all the rage. The shop lasted into the late 1940's or early 1950's.

Thanks Roger for the memories.

Do you remember the Ranch Supermarket? Boy, I sure do. You could get everything in that place. Here's a picture of its 1967 opening. It is now gone but not forgotten.

Enough. I have told you everything that I know and some things I don't Talk to me.

2013-06-29

By Joe Skvarenina

I have been challenged. Pam Moncrief writes, "I wanted to contact you for a specific reason, but first, let me say thanks for writing an interesting and often thought provoking history article for the Saturday Daily Reporter. It's always the first thing I read when I open the paper on Saturday morning!

Your recent article on Apr 13 was particularly interesting. The picture you printed looked very similar to my own home on E. North Street. In fact, the closer I looked it, I realized it WAS my house!! I believe you mistakenly used the wrong picture with the story...and I am absolutely thrilled that you did! The house at 510 W. Main Street is not the picture you used.

My address is 328 E North Street. There is another house very similar to ours...on W. North Street just west of Pennsylvania. When I saw the picture in the paper, I assumed it was the blue house that looks like ours, but the closer I looked at the photo, I suddenly realized it really was our house. We have lived here since 1987 and have tried over the years to find out the past history of our home. At some point, siding was added, and probably at that time, certain architectural detail was lost. So sad. Since you have the picture, do you also have a story?? I do know the house to the left was built in the 1870s for a mayor with the name "Davis". I was told the two houses had the same contractor. I've attached a recent picture for your reference."

Thanks Pam but I still don't agree so I have decided to let the readers to decide. What do you think? Also what can you tell me about the history of Pam's house?

I am working on a couple of short stories one on the history of Greenfield Sertoma probably founded about 1963? What do you know? Have you participated in any of its activities? I am also working on the history of the Hancock County Sheriff's Department . Do you have any stories to share?

Jean Bradbury shares with us a 1948 telephone directory of Greenfield. It is interesting to look at the ads: The Greenfield Hotel, Steam Heat, Modern, Private Baths phone 4204; Farmers Feed and Hatchery, 412 W. Tague Street; Greenfield Ice and Fuel, Railroad and Riley Avenue, or how about Kinder's Garage, 11 E. Main Street? Do you remember Guthier's Clothing Store? In 1948 the retail Grocers in town were Gorman's, Helms, Haerberle Park & Shop , Kiver's, Key Hole, Luz Market, Orr's Market, Strickland's, and Swift's. There probably are many others. Thanks, Jean also tells that Citizens Bank is on 8 West Main and the Greenfield savings and Loan is 14 West Main.

Enough. I have told you everything that I know and some things I don't. Talk to me.

2013-06-25

By Joe Skvarenina

I have been challenged. Pam Moncrief writes, "I wanted to contact you for a specific reason, but first, let me say thanks for writing an interesting and often thought provoking history article for the Saturday Daily Reporter. It's always the first thing I read when I open the paper on Saturday morning!

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2013-06-22

By Joe Skvarenina

Graham Richardson writes, "The Thomas Drug Store was indeed located at 2-4 East Main Street in Greenfield (the corner location with a partial round tower, with the name Randall on it, that was formerly topped with a conical roof). The west room (#2) housed the soda fountain and grill that acted like a homing beacon for so many of the former Greenfield High School students after classes ended each day. The east room (#4) housed the pharmacy counter and the retail items for sale. If you went farther east along that part of Main Street, you would pass Carr-Macs (clothing), Greenfield Banking Company (still there), and Danner's "dime store" variety store (#18, a clothing shop now). The Sears store was on the ground floor of the two- or three-story building at 102 East Main, on the corner across from Danner's, where a parking lot now presides. Selected businesses located west of State Street (Hwy 9) were P. N. Hirsch (former Goodman's) department store (#2), Roberts Drugs (#7), Pickett Hardware (#10), McCuller's Meat Market (#11), Nay's Jewelry (#18), Stafford Pharmacy (#23), and Koob's Jewelry (#28)...all addresses from the advertisements in the 1963 and 1964 GHS yearbooks."

Thanks, Graham.

Tony May is writing a 50th anniversary publication of the Mr. Vernon Schools. Can you believe it. It has been 50th years since Mt. Vernon School corporation started. If you have any photos you would like to share you can contact Tony at the Mt. Vernon School Corporation offices. I do believe that he is on the school board

I met gene Addison the other day at a Historical Society meeting about Brown Township. He had a \$10 note with the Wilkinson Bank imprinted on it. Can you share a photo of the Bank? Let me know. the Bank building is Susie's Pizza in Wilkinson and the vault is still there with a second life as a storage closet of sorts.

What do you know about William Jennings Bryan ? Mr. Bryan ran for president against William McKinley in 1904 and William Howard Taft in 1908. His nickname was the "Great Commoner" and he was a democrat. Bryan visited Greenfield in 1903. During his visit he made two speeches. One was on the east side of the Courthouse and the other at Gant's Opera House across from the Old Carnegie Library on West North Street. On Oct 3, 190g he spoke for the last time in Fortville.

Doe any one have a photo of the old Gant's Opera House?

Do you know anything about a swirled glass bottle marked "Chero-Cola-Greenfield Indiana"? It was bottled In Greenfield around 1926 by the Greenfield Bottling Company and distributed by Nehi drinks. the location was probably the site of the Old Late Night Pizza or the Greenfield Ice Cream Company.

Enough. I have told you everything that I know and some things I don't. Talk to me.

2013-06-15

By Joe Skvarenina

Hugh Owen O'Donnell from Notre Dame writes, "I read your biography on Fr C O'Donnell of Notre Dame

Do you know where his parents and grandparents are from...or can you find out." Very little is known about Father O'Donnell in Greenfield.

He was born in Hancock County in 1884 at Slabtown northwest of Greenfield. I think Slabtown was the a one room school district along Fortville Pike maybe in the area of the Indiana Box Company. My wife took me to an located were an old school was located near the factory. She says this might have been Slabtown. But i really don't know for sure.

A few years after his brith the family moved to Kokomo. He entered Notre Dame University in 1899 gradiated in 1906 and would continue on for his Ph,D. He entered the priesthood and became a professor of English on the campus. He served in WW I and was called to serve as chaplain in 1917. Father o'Donnell returned to teach at Notre Dame abd later served as President from 1928-1934. He wrote books of poetry.He ir remebered there as an outstanding teachet, poet, write and President of the University.

I have never been able to find much more about his Greenfield years and family.

Remember when there was about a grocery store on every corner. Shivey's was just down the street on the corner from where I live. According to my friend Charlie their doghnuts were 60 cents a dozen. Key Hole was a grocery on National Road. The onwer was Ira Key and everyone went to that site from East Greenfield. There was also Jim Gorman's store on South Pennsylvania and now a used appliance store. The pictures are of the grand opening of Gorman's on July 7, 1957. What store did you mother use?

Today is the Ice Cream social at Edelweiss Equine Assisted Therapy Center. It was founded in 2004 on Dick Bowen property. But they are now leasing property on 100 South from the Hancock County Community Foundation. Edelweiss has gown over thge years. If you have some time today go out and take a look.

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2013-06-08

By Joe Skvarenina

Bill Hamm tells that he found Greenfield Ice Cream tokens in telephone book from 1933-1935 telephone books. It would be interesting to collectors because they are different sizes. Greenfield tokens are unique with much information.

Jane Wakeland writes she has a spatula and it says 'Merry Christmas and Happy New Year' on one side and on the other it says "Greenfield Ice and Fuel" phone 280. Does anyone know anything about Greenfield Ice and Fuel? I do believe that bit was located in the area of Mitchell Fleming Printing and the building has been torn down.

Barry J. Ewell tell us about his book, "Family Treasures: 15 Lessons, tips, and tricks for discovering your family history.". He provides us with a free download. You might contact him at itrustbj57barry@gmail.com.

Delma Scott says she has a very interesting collection of newspaper clippings from the 1880's in a business ledger. It was not uncommon individuals to use other books and ledgers for scrap books. It was scrap booking in the old days.

Kellie Jane Miller writes I live in Elaine Whitfield's old house at Fountaintown Forge and she has several questions and would like Elaine to make contact about the house they both lived in. Kellie has a six foot deep hole in her yard she wonders about the purpose in addition to the gas well under the back pantry. The saga continues.

Phil Ramsey writes at Buckley's in Cumberland. Today it is called Sero's. Phil tells that Frank Buckley and his father, Roy Ramsey of Knightstown met in the 1940's. Mr. Buckley had a small building on the sidewalk where Sero's now stands. He sold barbeque, sandwiches and baked beans. Dad and Frank got acquainted he stopped for sandwiches three times a week. The Buckley's restaurant was built in the 1930's or 1940's. Mr. Buckley lived in the white house next door. Mrs. Buckley ran the cash register on the weekend and their teenage daughter waited on tables. During WW II my family traveled to Buckley's every Saturday night for dinner. It was necessary to arrive early to get a seat.

Phil, thanks for the memories. Charlie White provides us with 1953 copy of a Greenfield newspaper with the Christian Chevrolet Ad I 1952 Chevy sold for \$1550 and a 1941 Ford for \$175. In another edition of the publication it tells us that Stringtown acquired its name due to the fact that the homes were strung out along the national road for a distance of a quarter of a mile.

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2013-06-01

By Joe skvarenina

Melva Smith did a very interesting presentation the other day at the Hancock County Historical Society Meeting about Buck Creek Township. She told us about John Burris who married Esther Terry who was reported to have been the daughter of a trapper and a Cherokee Indian. John and Esther lived in a cabin just east of the Mt. Comfort School. When the owner of an old building began tearing it down to make way for the Commercial Park he found an old log cabin. Researchers determined that it was land owned by John Burris and the cabin was his. Trinity Lutheran School on 16th Street purchased the cabin to rebuild on their property. Another good tale was about William Smith. He had a cabin which sat in the middle of the Shell Station which was on Mt. Comfort Road. According to some William was a wealthy man who buried his money on his property. Many would sneak on his land at night to look for the money by digging around. The situation became so pesky that William took to sitting on his front porch with a shot gun across his knees to ward off trespassing money hunters. William McClarand Russell known as Clar died in Indianapolis during the Great Depression. The family went to the city and got his body. They dressed him in a paper suit, placed him in a cardboard casket and buried him without tombstone in the Burris Hendricks Cemetery. Thanks Melva for the stories.

Buck Creek Township has furnished men of statewide fame. Dr. James W. Hervey from Old Mt. Comfort was the father of the Indiana State Board of Health.. Professor Abraham Shortridge was a Superintendent of Indianapolis Public schools and the second President of Purdue University. The Rev. Lorenzo Dow known as the Yankee Preacher owned land and traveled throughout the area as an itinerant preacher.

Buck Creek was first settled in 1827. It was struck off from Sugar Creek Township and added to nonexistent Jones and Union Townships. In 1853 it assumed its present size.

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2013-05-25

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2013-05-11

By Joe Skvarenina

I had the opportunity the other day to participate in the dedication of the new National Road interpretive panel on the Court House Square placed by the Indiana National Road Association. *If you have the opportunity go take a look.* The National Road or Route 40 as we know it today made major contributions to Indiana, Hancock County and Greenfield. Today we know it as US Route 40 or n Greenfield Main Street. At one time the National Road was the Main Street of the Nation. It began in Cumberland Maryland and was supposed to end in St. Louis Missouri. But it never went further than Vandalia Illinois. It was the first Federal Highway. Thomas Jefferson was the first President to articulate the idea. Jefferson deemed it wise to create a national pathway to America's vast western interior.

Congress debated its benefits. Was it appropriate for National government to become involved in internal improvements?

In 1820 Congress finally allocated \$10,000 for laying out the first stretch of the road. It was surveyed in 1827.

In 1829 the first appropriation for the opening of the road in Indiana was made by Congress. It was for \$51,600. The 1827 survey map of this area shows an old state road running nearly parallel to National Road to Richmond In Hancock County we know this as the "Old Centerville Road" which would have traced the path of South Street in Greenfield today.

It was constructed through Indiana in 1834-1835. Superintendents Homer Johnson and John Milroy were paid \$800 per annum to do the job. In June they advertised for proposals to cut timber for a road 28 ft. wide and to remove the stumps in the center and do the grading. There were many requirements. No stumps were to be over 15 inches high. Those in the center of the road were to be rounded and trimmed so as not to cause serious damage. The actual cost of construction was \$121 per mile.

In the early days there were substantial economic benefits to this great highway. Hotels, Inns, and Taverns sprung up and were located in Charlottesville, Cleveland and along other places on the pike. The Dayton and Indianapolis Stage brought mail and passengers along the road. It also brought along news of the recent political happenings. I took 2 1/2 days to travel from Dayton to Indianapolis

Animals, flocks of turkeys, were driven east by east to market. White settlers went west to meet our nation's manifest destiny. The 1830's and the 1840's were the hay day of the National Road and many recorded what they saw

Thomas B. Seawright tells..."As many as 24 horse carriages have been counted in a line at one time on the road...

laden with merchandise and drawn by six conestoga wagons were visible all day long at every point and many times until late in the evening besides innumerable caravans of horses, mules and hogs..."

Benjamin Parker tells,..."a flood of emigrants poured along the great highway from June to November. These companies of wagons were those of the "movers" as we termed the families that were traveling to open farms. Many families occupied 2 or more road wagons with their household goods, and their implements. with extra horses, colts, cattle, sheep, and sometimes hogs were led or driven behind...while even the resolute family, the members of which carried their worldly possessions upon their back or pushed them forward in handwagon was not an unfamiliar spectacle...But the greatest wonder and delight of all was the stage coach, radiant in new paint and drawn by four matched horses in their showy harness and filled inside and on top with well dressed people. I think that there has never been a more graceful or handsome turnout than one of those fine stage coaches drawn by a splendid team of matched horses, and driven by such drivers as used to handle the ribbons between Richmond and Indianapolis..."

But what left to see in Greenfield today from the National Road era? On the courthouse square at the site of the Chapman later Gooding tavern is now Greenfield's City Hall. Former President Martin Van Buren, former Vice President R.M. Johnson, Henry Clay, abolitionist John Brown and Congressman George Washington Julian were guests at the establishment. George Knox an African American barber had his shop at the site. He later went on to establish the Indiana Recorder one of the first African American Newspapers in the state

At one time, circa 1834, travelers on the National Road washed their horses in a pond, five feet at its deepest on the northwest corner of the public square.

The second courthouse on the square was used from 1834 until 1851. Later the bricks from the second court house were used to build the old Christian church at the rear portion of the former DH Goble Printing on American Legion Place. This is now a parking lot. Another unique structure was the Thomas Walpole house which was located on the National Road. It was at the rear of Miller's jewelry and burned in 1992.

The charm of the old National Road also appealed to James Whitcomb Riley and the Riley Old home is

of the National Road Era. In his narrative verse the Child's World scenes are laid out facing the highway. I am sure that some of his verse was inspired by the characters he met long the road during his childhood. James Whitcomb Riley called Route 40 a road that blossoms with romance.

Enough I have told you everything that I know and some things I don't. Talk to me.

2013-05-18

By Joe Skvarenina

My dad was a WW II veteran but he rarely talked about the War. We are losing that "greatest generation" quickly. May I suggest if you have one of those fellows in your family you take the opportunity to do a little family history and engage them in a conversation about their experiences before it's too late. My dad left behind a map with dates and all the places he island hopped in the Pacific while in the Navy. But that is about it. Let me give you an example of some of the wealth of information that you can find.

Tom Cone shared with me a copy of Dennis Kingen's diary of his combat missions. Mr. Kingen was a member of the Army Air Force. He was a nose gunner on a B24. In his effort to connect with his experiences Mr. Kingen tells some interesting stories. For example on July 22, 1944, "our wing bombed an oil refinery in Italy. The target was about 2 and half miles north of the city. We caught some intense and accurate flak over the target...I don't think we lost any ships...When we got back to our field it was closed in with about a forty miles cross wind blowing...Landings were plenty rough and one airship cracked up after making an early return killing the pilot... On August 17, 1945, "Lost two engines over target, bailed out over Bulgaria. Two tail gunners did not jump, engineer killed because shut did not open in time, one gunner had broken leg last seen by me in hospital Sofia. After three days turned myself in because I did not know where I was and only hoped it was Yugoslavia...Spent time as a prisoner of war..." There are many others like Dennis Kingen in Hancock County.

The local Hancock County community responded to the war effort in every way that it could. Victory Gardens were soon a main stay for each and every table in town. Each family was supposed to have one, to increase the supply of vegetables for the family and to make more available for public consumption. Meat would soon be a premium item in the stores because much was needed to supply our military. Those who lived on the farms often found themselves sacrificing chickens for the table. Rationing quickly became a fact of life in Hancock County and other communities so you were limited as to how much you could buy of almost any item. Certainly some meats, fats, oil, sugar and some dairy products, tomatoes, canned and frozen fruits and many other items were quickly added to the list of items rationed. The Office of Price Administration set the value by points and then set a weekly allotment per person and you were allowed an appropriate number of ration stamps for the item according to the need and or size of our family.

You can see what the ration stamps looked like from the above picture. Enough I have told you everything that I know and some things I don't. Talk to me.

2013-05-04

By Joe Skvarenina

Joe Copeland from the County Highway Department shares with us a restored Iron Bridge sign. Does anyone know anything about the Greenfield Bridge and Sewer Works circa 1906? tis sign was over Fall Creek probably in the Fortville area. Ray Richardson tell us that there is now only one iron bridge left in the county.

I do believe it is in Blue river Township. It would have been one of the biggest iron bridges in either Rush or Hancock County and was built as a result of a 1916 flood which washed away a previous wooden structure. It's cost was \$11,000. This bridge was built by Burk Construction of New Castle. . On April 11, 1916 officials from Rush and Hancock counties got together at the site with their to official record books to open bids. Two bids were for limber trussed spans. Four for the County Engineers plan for a span of 200 feet, an extra long ordinary steel bridge with wood block floor and concert abutements. After much debate the groups for both counties decided on steel.

This bridge bears unique panels , unusually wide, with cord top angle variations from panel to panel and mid panels like prior "camelback" designs with the top panels and the lowest sharing a common downward angle toward the endposts. In the good old days bridge designs were not standadized essentially because of the cost of steel. This particular bridge is one of the first all riveted bridges in the Indiana. Much of the riveting actually took place at the site of the constuction which would have been a difficult thing to do. If you can go take a look.

Enough I have told you everything I know and some things I don't. Talk to me.

2013-04-20

By Joe Skvarenina

I believe this is photo of the Cooper Weil Reynolds house at 510 West Main Street in Greenfield. The contractor was Charles Mathews circa 1895 and John Felt was the architect. It is Queen Anne Style of architecture. Mr. Jerome Black built the house for his daughter Minnie Black who married Billy Cooper. Mr. Black was in the lumber business called Black and Gordan Lumber Company. The lumber company forms the nucleus of the current Center Street Shops. Billy Cooper was a bookkeeper at the Lumber Company. The second daughter Eloise lived in the house after she married Mr. Walter Weil. Walter Weil built the Village Theatre building now Ricks Center. Also interesting to note that Melissia Cooper owned the Carnegie Library property.. Mr. Black was also involve in the gas business and his partner in this venture built a similar house at 120 Walnut Street for \$2800. Some deal,

This house was converted into apartments in the 1940's and Mrs. Jean Tracy have piano lessons there for years. In 1958 Alex and Judy Reynolds bought the home.

Have you been to the to see what Bob Hunt has done with the old Masonic Building. There are many artists studios, the Soup and Herb, and it is the perfect place for a party or a wedding reception. I was in it the other day at their friday event and the place is something else. I am so very happy that the structure was saved and restored. In 1895 the Masonic Building had a stairway to the basement. J Ward Walker's occupied the first floor and the basement while the masons met upstairs which is now a banquet area. The Goodman's department Store and later P.N. Hirsch later occupied the bottom two floors as commercial outlets. Hancock County once used it as office space. Now it is Mr. Hunt's capable hands and he serves as a good example to other national road property owners. Thanks for the kind words to the group who bought books. By the way this is the second of three masonic buildings. The first was at the location of Rodafields Auto parts and long since gone.

Enough. i have told you everything I know and some things I don't. Talk to me.

2013-04-13

By Joe Skvarenina

Rebecca Crowe from the Fortville Library writes, "When the State began widening Hwy 238, they took out the historical marker which marked the spot of the original town of Walpole/Phoebe Fort's Corner. (The sign was about 8 feet high with 3 ft. of the pole being underground.) The owner of the property of that time, Scott D. Wright, was told by the State to move the sign that they had pulled up and thrown to the side of the road. (Scott Wright owns the property, but he lives in Dayton, OH). So, he trucked it off to his garage in Ohio, where it still sits.

With the highway project complete, we would like our sign brought back home. I have contacted Scott Wright through George Rafert – who now owns the house on the property that belongs to Scott Wright. Mr. Wright no longer has any business contacts in Indiana that would bring him into the state but by saying that we would send someone to Dayton to pick up the sign. He agreed, and he only asked that we call before we send someone.

I am humbly asking for anyone who travels to Ohio frequently who has about an 8 foot bed truck (or larger) to help us to bring our sign home.

Please contact me at the Fortville Library Monday thru Friday 9:30 – 5:30 PM if you would be willing to accept the task and help Rebecca and Fortville out.

This sign was one of nine signs that the Hancock County Historical Society placed in 1976. It said, "Approximately 1 mile north site of Phoebe's Corner post office. Post office at that time bore the name of Walpole for early lawyer Thomas Walpole." But what do you know about Fortville?

on september 30, 1865 a petition was presented to change the town name from Walpole to Fortville and to incorporate it. In the election 36 votes were in favor and 19 votes were opposed. Back on February 12, 1849 Cephas Fort made the original survey of 33 lots on land he owned along the Flat Fork. In 1949 the town of Fortville celebrated its centennial year, Skitch Henderson and his famous band played for the centennial ball in the school gymnasium. A pageant titled "Ten Decades' on Parade was given every evening at 8:30 pm. Fortville is the largest town in Hancock and for many years the center of a large grain farming area.

Enough. I have told your everything that I know and some things I don't. Talk to me.

2013-04-06

By Joe skvarenina

Father Charles Leo O'Donnell, eleventh president of Notre Dame University and one of the most brilliant minds of his day was born two mile northwest of Greenfield, November 15, 1884 in an area called Slabtown. His father Neil was a farmer. He lived the first two years in Hancock County before moving to the KoKomo. I have over the years attempted to locate Slabtown. I have received different answers. But fellow historian Marlena Linne might have helped us find answer. She tells there was a Slabtown School #15 with Iduna Smith as teacher. She goes on to say

"I checked my 1876 Hancock County map and there was a school on the west side of Fortville Pike just south of 200 North (New Road). That would certainly be close to the area where Reverend O'Donnell was born. The school was still on the 1887 map and was shown as District #12. I don't know if this is the same school that was indicated as District #15 in the Richman History book of 1916 or not. Maybe more school districts were added between 1887 and 1916 as the population grew and the number was changed. I checked the rest of the 1887 map of Center Township and couldn't find a District #15. The highest one I found was #14, which was in the vicinity of Curry's Chapel." Is this the slab town in O'Donnell's biography?

Can anyone add more to this tale?

Carole Miller writes , "My 91 yera yung mother-in-law recalls the centennial parade through downtown Greenfield when she was a small child. Her father Charles was a brother to George(Fanny) Andis the woman who donated the property for the hospital. Se remembers riding on a wagon in the parade with Charles and her mother, Rose. There was a person (Possibly McCorkle) on horse back riding beside the wagon. Do you or any readers have any photos of the event? She has no pictures of her father." Can anyone help this lady out locate a photo. Carole, Do you mean the centennial of Riley's birth? Whata year are we talking about?

Ron Foster from Community Corrections provides us with this promotional card from Thomas Drug Store, "Where friends meet" from the 1970's. I do belive the store was at the location of the old Sears building. He found it when he was working at East Side Screw building.

Enough. I have told you everything that I know and some things I don't. Talk to me.

2013-03-30

By Joe Skvarenina

Happy Easter! The postcard included with this column was mailed to Mrs. Clay McClarnon in Greenfield in postmarked 1914. One always finds postcards from this era. It was a popular way to communicate.

I had lunch the other day which turned into a dinner with friend Gary Wright. Pastor Wright is president of World Renewal International which located in rural Hancock county. His ministry is celebrating 25 years. World Renewal is a mission organization which is heavily involved in church planting and leadership training in the third world. in Haiti and Brazil the group has Christian Schools for children and youth. In Brazil they have Northeastern Seminary and in Haiti they are offering pastoral training on a regular basis. In Haiti they also operate orphanages. None of their pastors are subsidized salary wise. But each is given a pregnant goat and a brood of chickens so they have eggs and milk. This would also enable the pastor to start a business. I know that donors buy the chickens and goats.

But here is the connection. World Renewal International is located on the John T. Hatfield property. Gary's in-laws live in the old Hatfield Homestead which is one 850 East, It is an unique structure because Brother Hatfield built the home out of stones brought back from his evangelical trips in rural Hancock County. It is on the pioneer Hatfield farm just south of Cleveland Campground was once was a place for pilgrimage by Holiness people.

But who was John T. Hatfield? He was known as the "Hoosier Evnagelist" because of his extensive travel around the country preaching at tent meetings and Holiness campgrounds. In June 1902 Hatfield put up a tent in a pasture across from the Cleveland Methodist Church which is now an empty lot. The tent was for the purpose of holding a revival. In September of 1902 the Eastern Indiana Holiness Association purchased the 10 acre Munden pasture property for the campground. Eventually a large tabernacle replaced Hatfield's tent and it is there today. Over the entrance was a large sign lettered 'Salvation Park'. The Interurban made stops in the Cleveland area at least until the 1930's and the ease of transportation help the success of the Hatfield effort. I do believe that preachings are still held at the site.

Enough. I have told you everything that I know and some things I don't. Talk to me.

2013-03-09

Larry Hunt writes, "In your recent article, Ralph Strubbe mentioned two or three former establishments here in Greenfield. First was the Allis-Chalmers dealership on Indiana 9, where the Greenfield Banking Co. headquarters is currently located. That dealership was owned by Jim Souders. I remember going there during the '50's and '60's, and it was probably the last place I purchased a coke from a machine with the pull-down handle. Cost, 5 cents. Second, he mentioned the businesses where Carol's Cornerstone Cafe and the Community Corrections are now located. I believe Carol's was where the bus terminal was located, and the car dealership (Christian Chevrolet, then Greer Chevrolet), and later, Nickles Bakery Outlet were located where Community Corrections is currently location."

Do the rest of you remember the Eastside Screw Products? It was built in 1946 by W.O. Pope Contractor for Elwood 'Woody' Hollenbaugh and Harold Kepler at 115 S, Brandywine. The building is still at the site. Also do you recall the Nehi Bottling Company across the street from the passenger train depot on South Pennsylvania Street. It bottled grape and orange soda which was shipped across the country. I personally remember my grandmother having grape pop and us grandkids asking for coke. I do like grape pop now! Nehi left Greenfield in the 1940's.

Art Whitaker tells, in 1952 our Greenfield Tigers basketball team won the Greenfield sectional. According to Whitaker, "At that time you had to win four games to complete the task, because this was the era before class basketball." Whitaker reminiscences ..."we started out wednesday by defeating Franklin Township 57 to 52. Friday night we defeated Fortville 38 to 34. Saturday afternoon we defeated Maxwell 58 to 39 and that night we defeated Wilkinson 77 to 55. At Hinkle Field house the following saturday in the regional, we defeated Speedway 61 to 49, but during the evening we were outclassed by Tech. High School 70 to 46." Art goes on to add Tech. went on to state finals to finish runner up to Muncie Central, the state champions.

Also Mr. Whitaker wonders if anyone would have a video of these regional games. These games were one of the first to be on video. In the front row of the photo is Assistant Coach Bill Spacey, Joe Swift, Art Whitaker, Dick Darling, Jim Demaree, Jim Fletcher, Head Coach Wayne "Snookie" Irwin.

Second row Mike McDaniel, Ron Calhoun, Manager Earl Haynes, Bill Jackson, Manager Dick Crider, Fran White, and Ray Shirley. Thanks for sharing Art.

Enough, I have told you everything that i know and some things I don't. Talk to me.

2013-02-24

By Joe Skvarenina

Tim McDowell writes," I live near Philadelphia, and I remember reading an article of yours a while back about the cemetery where the gal James Whitcomb Riley based Orphant Annie on was buried. Is it the cemetery on the south side of Rte. 40 just past the flashing light as you're heading toward Indy? Is there another place near here besides that cemetery? I remember you saying she was buried in or near Philadelphia, or that's what I think I remember! I have two daughters born in the 70's who went through the Annie mania back then, I thought it would be fun to show them the resting place of the real person Annie was based on. "

Yes, Mary Alice Smith, or Little Orphant Annie, is buried in the Philadelphia Cemetery. the Hancock County Historical Society has a marker at the approximate location of the grave. Mary Alice Smith was born September 25, 1850 at Liberty Indiana. Mary Alice Smith came to the Riley Home as a boarder in 1862. According to Elizabeth Van Allen 's book,"she enchanted Riley and his brothers and sisters with weird and often frightening tales she told them at night before they retired to bed. She made a deep impression on Riley and he never forgot her." Her house which is still in exist one mile south of U.S. 40 at Philadelphia on Spring Lake Road. She died in the house on March 9, 1924 in this house.

In 1888 Greenfield was gas boom town and had the industry to prove it. The industrial area was between Center Street and Pennsylvania Streets and along the old railroad tracks on Depot and Osage. Streets. In fact the Old Home Stove company was in a building which the Indiana Box used until it burned down and now any empty lot by Mitchell Fleming printing This building might have also been National Adjustable Chair Company. The Greenfield Bottle and Fruit Jar was built in 1888 at the site of the west side Hardees. In 1897 this site became the Hollowegard Reese Bottle Work and remained that until 1897 at that point the Owens Bottle Company. It was closed in 1913 and burned down in 1923. I have been told when they built Hardees they found much glass scrap.

Enough. I have told you everything that I know and some things I don't. Talk to me.

2013-02-16

By Joe Skvarenina

I went to a very interesting birthday celebration the other day with my wife at the old Masonic Building. It was for Walter Worland and he is 90 years young. Walter attended Greenfield Schools. He was Editor and Published of the Hancock County Democrat Newspaper. He also worked as a printer for the Greenfield daily Reporter for 28 years. The office of the Hancock Democrat was on South Street where the Anglican Church is located today. Walter was big in democrat politics. in fact he was on the back of the train platform to welcome President Truman into Greenfield. He served in the Greenfield City Council for 12 years. Walter was very active in the community with the Elks, FOP, and the American Legion Post #119. In fact Walter served in the Army Air Corp during WW II. He has been President of the Riley Old Home Society Santa's Helpers, and the Hancock Herat Association In addition he has been very active in many Masonic organizations with leadership positions including but not limited to Hancock Lodge #101. walter has been the example of a leading citizen who cares about his community and we wish his many more productive years. By the way if you haven't been you should go inside the Masonic building wonders have been done with it.

Do you know about the Mr. William A. Bixler painting of the "Old Swimmin Hole". On Oct 7, 1916 Greenfield had a homecoming for Riley at which one thousand school children strewed flowers in his pathway. Shortly after Mr. William Bixler an artist from Anderson visited the community and was encouraged by local citizens to paint landmarks of town. With Mr. Durbin Davis he visited the 'Old Swimmin Hole". From descriptions on how it looked when Riley rambled through the woods and what was left of the spot, Mr. Bixler put the scene on canvas. The painting was done for John Mitchell Jr, and was favorably commented upon so Bixler eventually did another for Mr. Riley. Mr. Riley wrote a grateful acknowledgement on it and in response sent six volumes of verse to Bixler's six children. Bixler was also a poet, singer, photographer, teacher, writer, and newspaperman. Bixler repainted 5,000 copies of his work by 1918 which appeared in school rooms across the United States. According to one newspaper story, "He was awfully sick of the picture, but he always keeps painting it because almost everyday somebody pops up and wants another copy and is willing to pay for it,'

If you would like to see a Bixler one in hanging in the local history room at the Greenfield Library. Enough. I have told you everything that I know and some things I don't.

2013-02-09

By Joe Skvarenina

I have looked for this story in print and finally found it and now that I have verified it I do believe that you might find it interesting. After President Van Buren's defeat for reelection in 1834 he decided to make a tour of the west on the National Road, Cumberland Road or Route 40 or Main Street in Greenfield. His visit to Greenfield was a great occasion and the local democrats made extensive preparation for his entertainment. The journey from the east was made by stage coach and the drivers were Whigs aka republicans. During President Van Buren's administration he had vetoed bill for an appropriation for the improvement of the National Road. The west was very displeased at this action for the road in many places was almost impassable. The stage drivers had planned to give the Ex-President an opportunity to count the holes in the road. Near Greenfield there was a steep hill and at a signal the driver pulled his horses to the side and the famous traveler was pulled into the mud. When Van Buren arrived in Greenfield he was in deplorable condition and new clothes had to be provided. Now I think the hill the President was dumped on was straw board hill.

Do any of you know the location of strawboard hill? I do, let's see how close you get.

I was at Mt. Comfort school the other day watching my grandson Dean Maxwell and the other gentlemen play an action packed basketball game. As you come in the front door the school has one of the old Mt. Comfort High Band uniforms in a glass enclosed area. Did you know there was a high school at Mt. Comfort. According to a historical properties report prepared by Ross Nelson the property at 5275 West CR 300 North served as old #5 high school from 1899-1918. It was the first high school in Buck Creek Township. "the high school in Indiana dates from the 1870's when a number of city's and towns elected to establish a free public high schools." In the 20th century for reasons of consolidation these rural high school's gave way to larger school's and were gone by the 1930's. Ross also tells us about the Round Barn Inn st 6794 North CR 600 West which was built in 1916 and renovated into a bed and breakfast in the late 1980's. "Most round barns in Indiana were built in the 1870's to the 1900's , but the majority of them were built in the 1900's, when rural extension offices throughout the state promoted the round barn as an economical alternative to other types of barns. Round barns proved expensive to repair and did not accommodate today's larger modern-day farming equipment well...As a result round barns are considered one of the most susceptible barns to neglect and demolition and as of 1993 there are only 77 round barns left in the state" A would imagine most of these are in Fulton County. But the ground Pulliam farm in McCordsville that Gary Kingen farms has a round barn.

Enough. I have told you evrything that I know and some things I don't. Talk to me.

2013-02-02

Rebecca Crowe from the Fortville Library tells , " One of your Historical Society members ,Jamie Figg, gave me a copy of the Sept. Log Chain Newsletter in which Linda Shaffer was looking for information on Estelle and Benjamin Crosby. According to Rebecca," The 1880 Census has George & Hannah Apple and Estelle "Crosley" in the same household.

I have worked on the family history of the McCords. I found a Gladys E. Crosby, but my notes even go back and forth from Crosby to Crosley. She married Leo Hanna 24 May 1920.

On that thought.... I found a Benjamin Crosley in the William Cory household in 1880 that would be the right age and right locale.

I looked through a book that we have here called: Marion County, Indiana Birth Records: July 1882 to Sept. 1907 Compiled by Jane E. Darlington.

I know that the dates do not encompass Benjamin or Estelle, but tried it on a lark. I found something interesting. Two Crosley mothers were Apples. One of them had A.F. Cory as a physician.

I found a Stella May Crosley who married an Albert Wilson. In the 1900 Census, Stella's birthdate was in May of 1876.

I hope that this helps." Linda you can reach Rebecca at the Fortville Vernon Township Library.

Rihard McDaniel tells us more about Charlottesville. He indicates the community had two blacksmith shoppes, two gas stations, a Sinclair and Texaco and a little later Shell Station. Also a grain elevator, two restaurants and a motel on the east edge of town. There was a large garage with the Sinclair Station where you pumped gas by hand into a round glass tube and then drained it down into your car. You could also get your valves ground and your plow sharpened. Mr. McDaniel goes on to add this establishments are now all gone except the grain elevator. McDaniel tells that Charlottesville had a Post office as long as he can rememebr. He tells that in the 1930's Daddy Futlon picked up the mail at the railroad depot and brought it up Front street with his horse and buggy to the Post office. Outgoing mail was suspended on an arm alongside the railroad tracks by Don Copeland and the train would snatch it off as it went flying by and throw out a bag of incoming mail. Dr. E.B. Call was the town Doctor in the 1930's. McDaniel " tells he deivered me into the world in a small brick house just across from the Methodist Church which is still there." Some tell that James Whitcomb Riley would come through with his horse and buggy and when he got close to the toll booth at Six Mile Creek and US 40 he would whip horse into a run and go through without paying. Thank you Richard, I appreciate the recollections.

Do you remember the Steer Inn. Rob Young from National Road Insurance provides us with this photograph.

Enough. I have told you evrything that I know and sowem things I don't. Talk to me.

2013-01-26

By Joe Skvarenina

Julie Harmon writes," I am a new real estate investor who grew up and still resides in Greenfield. I have been researching old mills around the country that are being redeveloped as residential loft spaces. I have an idea for a similar project here, but I am having trouble finding much on our industrial history. Since most of the mills were burned completely my plan was to reproduce a building with similar likeness. My dilemma is that I need more history and pictures of a building worthy, and of course having had some impact on our community."

Does anyone have any photographs of any old mills in Hancock County. Are there any still around? I know many of the old mills in Hancock county burned down just because of the nature of their business. I have seen photos of the Helms Mill in Fortville or the old mill in Freeport about which the song "Down by the Old Mill Stream was written. But I don't know of any others. One of the first businesses in a pioneer community usually was a mill The first mills were water powered to be followed by steam operation. They were grist, corn crackers and saw mills to provide the necessities of life on the frontier. other early industries included tanneries, tile shingle, wollen and flax factories. Blacksmith's and nurseries were also present in early times.

This month Arcadia Press will issue my third volume of Hancock County History entitled "Post Card History of Hancock County" Some years ago I purchased a collection of Fortville postcards which I donated to the Fortville Library. I then borrowed many more from Joe Seiter who has an extensive Indiana post card collection. Mr. Seiter lives in Wanamaker and he and I met at the Greenfield Walgreens and spent at least half a day copying his Hancock County Collection. Mr. Johnson the manager of Walgreens and his staff were really sensational in helping to accomplish this task. I do hope you will enjoy it.

Marlena Linne from Philadelphia provides us with a copy of an article from the Fort wayne News Sentential dated May 23, 1922. In the story Greenfield Drug Clerk, Miss Rhoda Loehr says Clara Gibson Carl bought the arsenic which she used to murder her second husband and his father from her drug store. Local Clara Carl was accused of poisoning her first husband Robert Gibson and her second husband Frank Carl and Frank's father with the arsenic poisoning All seemed to die of similar causes. I do believe that Omer Stokes Jackson was the attorney for the defense. He was Tom Williams grandfather.

Gladys Bennett from Indianapolis writes Buckley's Restaurant aka Serio's was established by Frank Buckley in 1940. Prior to Buckley's there was a dinner at the site. Gladys also disputes a motel at the site. She claims that Buckley's was famous for its fried chicken.

By the way I am looking for some volunteer assistance to do some research. I am looking for someone to go through old newspapers. if you're interested please contact me.

Enough. I have told you everything that I know and some things I don't. Talk to me.

2013-01-19

Elaine Whitfield writes "I am writing in reference to your recent column about the property near the Fountaintown Forge that Larry Ratcliff was inquiring of. I spent part of my childhood in the one-story house next to the duplexes that he now owns. My parents, Ben and Marie Graper, bought the house in the Spring of 1960. At the time, the Sohio Pipeline company owned all that property where the houses and the forge are now. The duplexes and the buildings where the forge is located were all empty at the time. Sohio was selling all the property but still maintained the pipeline. There were pipeline markers nearby and I can remember seeing small airplanes flying over, checking the lines every few days. A few months after we moved in, Everett and Lula Cecil bought the duplexes and started renting them out. We made friends with a number of the families that moved in, so I remember spending a lot of time in the various duplexes. The story that I grew up hearing from my parents and the Cecils was that the one-story house (where we lived) had been a manager's house and the duplexes were for some of the workers. Yes, I believe the residential buildings were built in the 19-teens to twenties. I'm not sure when the pipeline buildings were built. A gentleman by the name of Mitch Hewitt bought the pipeling buildings a year or so after we moved in. He did customized metal fabrications for various industries. We would see all kinds of weird-looking pieces of equipment being hauled out of there. He eventually retired and those buildings were sold to the Forge at least 40 years ago. And yes, I remember the shared septic system for the entire complex. I also remember my usually quiet, composed father cursing as he was digging up a plugged septic line (more than once!). For a year or two, our backyard looked as if we had moles the size of St. Bernard. As for the duplexes, they were well-built with bedroom closets, up-stairs bathrooms, walk-in basements, huge attics accessed by a stairway off one of the bedrooms, and the most interesting thing for a 9-year old child, grape arbors in all the backyards. As for the Tidewater name, apparently Tidewater must have owned the property before Sohio owned it. The older folks in the neighborhood always referred to where we lived as "the Tidewater place". I lived there until I was 19 years old. My parents moved to a more senior-friendly house in the Fall of 1992. I still remember the place with fondness and our family has kept in touch with a few of the original families from the 1960's." Elaine and I both hope that this helps Larry Ratcliff in his quest.

Rob Young from National Road Insurance provides us with this old picture of the east side of the Courthouse Square. It was probably taken in the 1920's looking at the flappers and the cars in the background. Notice the businesses at the site, including Kirk Furniture which is today Andree's Florist with the Odd Fellows lodge which was upstairs. Next would be the new Coffee house, BC Brew and gently used clothing store, AD Bleiu there was probably an eatery at that location and the next building would be the National Road Insurance. If you go look at National Road you can see the building is outlined in its old shape. This building was one of three theaters in the community. I do believe the "Why Not." One of the girls in the photo is probably Anna Faye Medlin.

Judy Brown wants to know the history of Stringtown. I don't know much about it. What do you know? I know that Liberty Trees the blacksmith shop. was at the site across the street from the used furniture store. A concert pad is all that is left.

Enough. I have told you everything that I know and some things I don't. Talk to me.

2013-01-12

By Joe Skvarenina

Rod Commons from Pillman Washington want to know if any of your records provide a death date for Samuel Simpson Chandler? He was the second husband of a distant cousin Charity Commons and according to a book on Wayne County, he married Charity in Hancock County and died in the same county, apparently after 1863 since there is a tax roll and a Civil War registration, both for 1863. Mr. Commons can be reached at commonsrod@cpcinternet.com.

Gwen Corder wants to know more information about the Hancock County Poor Farm. The county poor farm was purchased on June 5, 1866 as a shelter for the indigent and homeless. It was also called the county infirmary. Some of the residents were mentally ill. The "Binford History" tell us the poor farm was located on the National Road, two and half miles east of Greenfield, in section thirty five, township sixteen north and range seven east. The superintendent's residence was a plain story and a half brick building. The infirmary building g was a plank house built in the rear of superintendent's residence. According to Binford," the building was not only cheaply constructed and poorly ventilated, but small and wholly inadequate to the demands of the unfortunate. In 1883 another building was planned. The home was constructed and the farm at that time was 217 acres with four acres being in garden with a variety of vegetables and two and one half in orchard. The new building had an administration building in the front with a two story connecting wing in the rear. It closed around 1959. In 1942 it had 17 males and four females were present. It's published capacity was 32 males and 18 females. The building has since been torn down and I do believe that there is an law enforcement practice shooting range at the site. I have always wished i had gone in the old building. Does anyone have any photos?

Charles Gambrel tell us that the old Gilboa Methodist church was probably moved south to the farm of Ron Kramer and may be now his brick veneered garage.

Rebecca Crowe from the Fortville Library tells us that in 1881 the Indiana Legislature established the State Board of Health establishing the State Board of Health in 1882 which was responsible for keeping vital statistics. Also would of the Great Depression WPA jobs was indexing the births between 1882-1929. This might be useful information for those who are researching,

Enough. I have told you everything that I know and some things I don't. Talk to me.

2013-01-05

By Joe Skvoreanina

Bud Goodyear from Wasila Alaska is writing a book on his childhood in Hancock County.

He moved to Hancock County in December 1944 with his parents. He graduated from Hancock Central High School, Class of 1957. After a stint in the USAF (1957-1961), He lived in Hancock County on and off until 1977 when He moved to Alaska. He has a BA from IUPUI, Class of 1977, and two graduate degrees from Alaska Pacific University, Anchorage, Class of 1989. He attended the high school Class of 1957 50th reunion in 2007 in Greenfield and provided two photographs to the Daily Reporter.

He grew up on a small farm on what is now named N 25 W, just north of W. 500 N. He worked for the Groves' Sugar Creek Stock Farm while a teenager. The family neighbors were Ray Watson, Harvey Gerode, Pauline Watson and Jesse Louder. His first wife, Nicole Chandler grew up in Greenfield at 508 North East Street.

The book working title is Hancock County: Boyhood Sketches. Bud was wondering if anyone would be interested in this project in the community, helping to get it published and polished. Bud, isn't Sara Palin from Wasila Alaska?

Ralph Strubbe stopped by to visit the other day. He was born in 1916 and will be soon 96 years young and he looks in decent health. He graduated from Greenfield High School in 1934 at the current Lincoln Park apartments. He attended Riley and Longfellow Schools. Do you know the locations of these buildings? His Grandfather Kingery lived in a log cabin northwest of Mohawk. He claims to have dug most of the gravel pits in Hancock County. Some along the Brandywine, the Johnson Pit in Charlottesville from which the gravel was used to build the old school building on the National Road. He tells at one time there was a Allis Chalmers dealership on State Route Nine at the location of the Greenfield Banking Company. He also tells that Carol's was a car dealership and Bus terminal, Tom New owned a grain elevator where the Work Release is located, the Interurban Garage was located at Riley Park Tire and the community gym was at the location of the old office supply. Also he added that the horse barns for the fair were at the site of the current water tower on Hancock Regional Hospital property.

Ralph was the one who was doing the excavating in the Christensen bog when he found two mastodons. Other animal remains also found at the site included the part of an ice age caribou, the only one found in Indiana. Ralph told he unearthed two skulls and he knew he had something. He loaded them in his truck and called the Glenn Black Laboratory at Indiana University. There is a third mastodon's jaw at the Log Jail Museum which was from Blue River Township. Some say that mastodons were hunted probably to extinction. Hancock County had Indians present at 9000 BC. Artifacts have been found that date to that time period. These Paleo Indians probably followed big game and their sites were temporary camps. The Glenn Black Laboratory lists 95 archaeological sites in our county.

On last thought Mr. Strubbe mentions that at West 150 North in the Maxwell area many large

rocks are found. I believe that those deposits were probably from the Wisconsin Glacier. Do any of you know?

Enough I have told you everything that I know and some things I don't. Talk to me.

2012-12-29

By Joe Skvarenina

Have you ever visit the Meridian Park area of Indianapolis. It is a part on the Mapleton Fall Creek or the near north side and bounded by Pennsylvania Street and Washington Boulevard from 30th Street to 34th Street. It is minutes from downtown. In the neighbor at 3128 N. Pennsylvania is a house called Tuckaway. it was home to the "Palmist to the Stars" Nellie Simmons Meier and her husband. Many early Hollywood celebrities visited there for a reading. Some of those included Leslie Howard, Lowell Thomas, Mary Pickford, Walter Huston and Lynn Fountaine just to name a few. Other palms she read included Meredith Nicholson. George Ade, Lew Wallace plus many others. And Jim Riley visited her for a reading too. Mrs. Meier kept impressions of all the palms she read. In 1937 she published a book called 'Lion's Paws; The Story of Famous Hands' The introduction to this volume is written by Meredith Nicholson.

Meier tells, " As I recall my personal contacts with James Whitcomb Riley, I remember one afternoon when he was talking of the spiritual world, predestination and fatalism." Riley told "...when i go to the circus , to see a man riding around the ring on a bare back horse, keeping a number of colored balls passing from his hands into the air and look again and again, without dropping one. But the great power has been keeping the rainbow balls of many universes moving through the space as He rides in His circuit."

According to her reading of Riley, his palms indicated a deeply emotional nature responsive to mental contacts and material conditions. Also his palms indicated a great sense of humor and the mercurial characteristics of humor, gravity, versatility, high spiritual understanding and plain homespun living. In addition he had dramatic gifts which, if he overcame his sensitiveness to appearing before the public , would have placed him with the great actors of his day. According to Meier a few days later she received his photograph and on the back was written,

"he poet to the palmist"
If she as happily read
His poems as his palm-
"Now by God's rood: h would have said,
' How satisfied I am.'

I do love old books and I found this one in the Riley Emporium. By the way I believe that Riley was into spiritualism. He attended séances with Booth Tarkington's sister. Also Sir Arthur Conan Doyle came to visit Riley circa 1888 and Doyle was quoted as saying the only reason he wrote 'Sherlock Homes was to fund his spiritualism adventures.

Enough. I have told you everything that I know and some things i don't. Talk to me.

2012-12-15

By Joe Skvarenina

Mike Holzhausen writes." Enjoyed the article in the Reporter about motels in Hancock County. I have lived in western Hancock County all of my 68 years. I have never heard of a motel that was associated with Buckley's restaurant. That used to be the place to eat in the 50's and early 60's since larger restaurants were few and far between. The building is actually Cumberland, Marion County and is still in use today as Sero's restaurant as you probably know. There have been other businesses in that building. The infamous Wild Blue Kangaroo bar was there for awhile as well as an insurance agency as I recall. The Ross Motel is now Sugar Creek Nursing and Rehab center. It was bui on land that was purchased from my grandfather that he owned and farmed. My aunt and uncle were resident managers for awhile in the 1950's

Carl Colip tells that Buckley's was where Sero's is in Cumberland. Lin Parson's tells that Buckley's closed in the the late 1960's and in the early 1970's the Wild Blue Kangaroo was in the building . He goes on to add the Hoosier Poet was US 40 and 600 East range Line Road. Also the Howard Hughes was located across from the Sweet shop. Lin doubts Buckley's had a motels at least in the 1940's.

Do you remember Ruth Harper? She was the first woman to serve in the role of County Assessor but did you also know that she was the first women Justice of the Peace ever appointed in Indiana history. It was in 1951. Other notable women include Irene Kramer who was the first women to serve as Hancock County auditor in 1978. Pat Elmore was the first woman to be elected as County Clerk in 1966.

Enough. I have told you evrything that I know and some things I don't. Talk to me.

2012-12-08

By Joe Skvarenina

LeRoy Heath writes, "50 plus years ago I was out with grandparents putting flowers at cemeteries and we stopped at one I think was in Hancock Co. There was a grave with 3 woman on each side. They told me the man in middle had outlived 6 or 7 wives. Do you know anything about that, and what cemetery we were at?"

LeRoy I contacted my resident cemetery expert Sue Baker who wrote the authoritative book on Hancock County Grave Yards and Tombstones and I am sorry to admit we need more information. Do you remember the location at all? How about the rest of you? Do any of you know about this burial.

Baker's book include burials from 1833 to 1933. Ther are ninety two cemeteries in the county. As an example there are five in Brandywine and Vernon Townships and eighteen in Sugar Creek and Center Townships. You can learn much history at these sites. I have done some research on the Gilboa Cemetery. It seems that at one time there was a Gilboa Methodist Church at the locality. The congregation started in the 1830's with a log church. In 1852 a frame building was built at the cemetery. The Rev Amos Spark was the first preacher. In the 1880's it reach it's peak with forty five members. A decade later it only had six members and the congregation closed. In the early 1900's the building was removed. Do any of you know if the building is still in existence? At the location there is five soldiers from the War of 1812, two from the Mexican American War, and eighteen from the Civil War. Gilboa is also the Hatfield family burying plot. John T. Hatfield was the founder of the Cleveland Camp Ground. Hatfield himself isn't buried at Gilboa but is laid to rest in Hollywood California. Gilboa is located in Blue River Township and I do beleive that the old Napleon Trace is nearby.

Enough. I have told you everything that I know and some things I don't. Talk to me.

2012-12-01

By Joe Skvarenina

Larry Ratcliff writes,,In 1991 we purchased two brick doubles at 5525, 5529 and 5549, 5553 S. 100 East Fountaintown, IN. While the mail comes out of Shelby county town of Fountaintown the property is actually located in Brandywine Township Hancock County. We believed that the doubles were built for the owners of the forge as they shared a septic system.

Until very recently I believed that the Forge was built in the early 1900's as was my doubles. However, I have recently learned that while the buildings were about that time the purpose was related to a gas company. As we have had problems with our shared septic system I have done some research only to find more mysteries. As I have found a solution to my septic problem on my own property I no longer need to share a system with them. I would like to know the history of the properties. The doubles were some of the finest homes in Indiana in the 1900's. We have seen evidence that they had gas lights and the quality on construction indicates that some very prosperous people owned them at one time. I have been unable to find an abstract and the court house records say little to make a cohesive story. I would really like to know the history of the people and the property. Can you help? Would this make a good column for you?"

Ok, Larry this is what I know,The Fountain Forge in the 1920's was known as the Tidewater Pumping Station and was used for pumping natural gas. The actual Fountain Town Forge actually started in August 1978. The forge does the old fashioned forging with steam hammer. Currently the forge does high pressure alloys along with corrosion resistant alloys cobalt alloys , etc. The Fountain Town Forge does a lot of military work. Does anyone know what it was before Tidewater Pumping? The houses were definitely used for workers r maybe managers. But that is about the best i can do right now. Anyone have more details?

The photo is the Ada New Church in East Greenfield, the current location is in the front of the Way Out Club. The photograph is from the Debbie Gray collection. After the Ada New School was built people came to the preaching's in the school and began to to agitate for a new church. Ada called a meeting and suggested a wonderful simple idea."The fields are full of boulders" she said," and farmers will be glad to get rid of them and haul them in for us." the plan worked well. Thomas Moxley, one of Greenfield's foremost architects gladly agreed to plan and oversee the building of the boulder church. Elmer New an attorney gave the lot. First large cash contribution of \$100 from General Albert New. It was completed in the spring of 1908 and was named the Ada New ME Church. She was a widow of James E. New, a prominent attorney from Indianapolis. I would like to fill in more details about the Ada New church and school. Does anyone know anything?

Enough. I have told you everything that I know and soem things I don't. Talk to me.

2012-11-17

By Joe Skvarenina

The photograph was provided by Debbie Gray who obtained it at an estate sale. This is a photo of a school that was located in East Greenfield. This section of Greenfield once called Oklahoma was located east of the Brandywine Creek. In 1908 local teacher Ada New asked for a new schoolhouse the school board would not consent at first. Mrs. New was persistent, and a plain frame building was soon erected. It was called the Ada New School. Many local pastors also preached in the school on a Sunday afternoon. In 1915 there were thirty-two one-room school houses in the county. In 1947 East Greenfield School was abandoned as the last one-room school house. After the decline of students in the East Greenfield School students were transferred to Riley School.

A change in the way people thought about public education caused much building activity. Many new schools were constructed in the period of 1900 to 1940 including a grade school in Brandywine Township in 1923, a school in Shirley in 1905 and Wilkinson in 1908 both in Brown Township. The Mt. Comfort School in Buck Creek Township was constructed in 1917 and the Eden School in 1922 by the Hancock Central School District. The Charlottesville School was constructed by the Jackson Blue River combined townships. The New Palestine School was constructed in 1919 by Sugar Creek Township. The Fortville School was built in 1938 and the McCordsville School in 1926 by Vernon Township. I wonder how many of these buildings are around today?

Today the graded schools are of course dominant. Educators claim in part because the public became aware of the fact the one-room school house education was deficient? The new intelligence testing during WW I helped make this determination.

Enough. I have told you everything that I know and some things I don't. Talk to me.

2012-11-10

By Joe Skvarenina

Jacque writes...From the book History of Hancock County by George Richman(1916), Charles L Pope (1850-1927) wrote a story of his life in Buck Creek Township with his parents Christian and Sophia Pope, and his Uncles William and Frederick. The brothers arrived and settled in the county in the 1830s. In the story, Charles speaks of his father and uncles working on "the canal", returning home every two weeks. The only canals I'm familiar with are in Broadripple, downtown Indy, and out by Metamora. Are there any other canals in the vicinity being built in the mid 1800s? Do you know to which they most likely traveled during that time?

She also tells... I'm trying to find information on Isaac Pope (Dec. 1970s) who farmed in the northern part of the county. He inherited or purchased land that was owned by Christian Pope in the 1880s. Was he also known as Jack? I've heard of Jack and Maggie Pope who lived on 600N. Are Isaac and Jack the same person? Is he a descendant of Christian or his brothers?

Can anyone answer Jackie's inquiries?

Jackie I would think it would be difficult to determine actually what canal but I bet it would be the Whitewater Canal. In the early days because the roads were so bad the citizens of Indiana wanted access to outside markets. The Internal Improvement Act of 1836 provided for three major canal projects which included the extension of the Wabash and Erie Canal from Lafayette; the construction of the Whitewater Canal around the Cambridge City area and Metamora which was supposed to link the National Road with the Ohio River; and the construction of the Central Canal, running from the Wabash and Erie Canal near Peru to Indianapolis and southwest to Evansville. The system of 1836 also promised a macadamized road from New Albany to Vincennes. Also the Act of 1836 included construction of a railroad from Madison to Lafayette through Indianapolis plus some other items. The Legislature authorized \$10,000 at 5% interest to fund the projects. There was a financial panic of 1839 and none of the projects were completed. Canal workers had finished ninety miles on the Wabash and Erie, thirty miles on the Whitewater and Nine miles on the Central. The State of Indiana was insolvent and in 1841 officials couldn't even pay the interest. The Whitewater Canal was eventually completed in 1846 and was operated by a private company. So my guess because it started in Wayne County would be the Whitewater Canal. Also an early settler of Brandywine Township was John Pope.

Enough. I have told you everything that I know and some things I don't. Talk to me.

2012-11-03

By Joe Skvarenina

When i was younger and gas was cheap my parents went for many sunday afternoon drives and some summer vacation.

Many of my generation who grew up in the 50's or 60's remember those drives and the automobile age with fondness. We would travel the Lincoln Highway, National Road, Brookville Road and others highways with delight. The war was over and almost every family had a car to hit the open road. Sometimes we would stay in motels the very word being of the auto age. A motel was a combination of the word hotel and motor. People wanted nice places to stay so the early tourist camps or tourist homes were no longer popular. You can see examples of the clustered cabins called tourist camps along the Brookville Road. At the intersection of State Route Nine and 52. At the site is an example of a tourist camp which existed for many years. In fact some of the cabins are still there and used as homes But people wanted some thing better to stay in with the comforts of home. So by 1951 more than 4,000 motels were built in Indiana. Between Richmond and Terre Haute there were approximately 120 of them constructed. True people were passing through Indiana to go to other vacation sites but they wanted affordable comfort. They wanted heat, morning coffee and the ability to park in front of their door.

Do you remember the Shamrock Motel constructed in 1936 east of Cumberland. Or how about the Ross Motel in western Hancock County. The Ross Motel consisted of 11 stone and brick units arranged in a v pattern and set back from the traffic on 15 acres. The Ross Motel even offered Television. The Ross was considered great luxury. But with the coming of the Interstate Highway people no longer traveled the state routes and the needs for these establishments diminished. Do you remember the Hoosier Poet Motel, the Howard Hughes Motel or the Economy Motel just off Philadelphia. Or how about Buckley's Motel and Restaurant. Do you remember the location of Buckley's and some others. Today some of Motels serve as residential apartment buildings but few exist as motels along our state highways.

Enough. I have told you everything that I know and some things I don't. Talk to me.

2012-10-20

By Joe Skvarenina

In 1906 the Hancock County Democrat Newspaper published a reference book similar to the ones our Daily Reporter publishes. Did you know that in 1903 Hancock County had 3 acres of tomatoes, 5 acres of tobacco and one acre of watermelons. In 1904 Hancock County had 8,581 acres of Timothy producing 12,340 tons at an average of 1.43 tons per acre. In 1904 Hancock County reported 882 head of cattle and in 1903 21,270 hogs. Soy beans weren't introduced into the county till about 1926. The butter produced in the county in 1904 455,297 pounds and 260 gallons of milk. During that time period there was 1273,030 milk cows in the county.

In 1906 Greenfield had four miles of brick streets and thirty miles of cement walks. In 1882 there were 180 miles of grave; roads. In 1906 where were 210 miles. Also in 1906 politically Hancock County had been usually Democratic with the present City and County officials belonging to the party. By the way the President in 1906 was Theodore Roosevelt who was a republican.

In addition there was a church in town called the 'Heavenly Recuits' which has been around about eight years and located on West Pierson Streets. I believe that the building still exists at the site. Also this directory tells us that the largest Catholic Church in the county was Mother of God in Shirley with 400 members. Greenfield and Fortville only have 200 members in their Catholic Churches. It also tell us about the National Adjustable Chair Company which was organized 1901 with capitol of \$20,000. I do believe that the location of the plant was south State Road 9 at the curve. Does anyone have a photo of the old plant? If you have one of these chairs it is a rare antique. factories in Greenfield included one machine shop, one reclining chair company, planning mill, job printing factories, fruit jar and bottle company, saw, flour mill, bottle factory, broom factory dowel pin factory probably some others. Wilkinson had one window glass,, bottle glass and kitchen cabinet factory. In 1906 Fortville had four factories which included a coil and hoop factory, flour mill, grain elevator and a chemical factory. In New Palestine you found a flour mill, saw mill, and a wagon stock factory. Maxwell chief industry was the chain works.

In this time period hancock County was very industrialized but one must remember it was the during the gas boom and the era of free gas.

Enough. I have told you everything that I know and something's I don't. Talk to me.

2012-10-13

By Joe Skvarena

Steve Meeks. President and Chief Executive of the Charlottesville Virginia Historical Society writes," This year Charlottesville Virginia is observing its 250 anniversary. As part of our commemoration activities we are interested in the history of other Charlottesvillees in the US. Can you enlighten us on Charlottesville Indiana?"

Charlottesville is in Jackson Township in the eastern portion of the county. Jackson Township has only two towns-Cleveland and Charlottesville. Both towns are located on the National Road, Route 40, which originally went from Cumberland Maryland to Vandalia Illinois when Congress ran out of funds to complete it. American went west on the National Road during its period of Manifest Dystiny. The National Road. was the first federal highway which was surveyed through Indiana in 1827 and constructed in Indiana in 1834 and 1835. Mary Landis, an early tavern keeper in Charlottesville, sat by her window and counted ninety prairie schooners going west on the national road. There was substantial benefit to towns located on the highway.

The original survey for Charlottesville Indiana was made by David Templton on June 6, 1830. In 1867 it was incorporated with a population of 254 including 64 voters. An election was held on October 7, 1867 at which J.H. Allison was elected clerk; Henry Morris, treasurer; Sylvester Baker assessor; John Girty, marshall along with three trustees. Its charter was forfeited in 1880 over financial problems. it never incorporated again. One rural free mail delivery route was established April 1, 1903. The first rural telephone exchange was in Charlottesville. There were Masonic, Odd Fellows, and Daughter's o Rebekah Lodges in the community. A brass band was organized into the community in 1869 or 1870. This band continued to play into the 1890's. There was a Citizen's Bank of Charlottesville along with a Charlottesville Burial Club which was organized January 27, 1912. Historically Charlottesville had Methodist, Christian, Lutheran, and Friends Churches. The Lutheran church which was founded in 1847 disappeared after several years of operation. The other churches still exist in some fashion.

In the 1900's the community had a grocery and a hardware. There was a famous Charlottesville-Wilkinson football rivalry for years. Charles Elmer Fox who was king of the hobos in the 1970' lived in Charlottesville in his later life. He wrote books and newspaper articles about living on the road.

Enough. I have told you everything that I know and somethings I don't . Talk to me.

2012-10-06

By Joe Skvarenina

Riley days rolls around quickly. I hopw you are having a great Riley Days. How did it all begin? The honoring of a great man is common to us in this country. Minnie Bell Mitchell while attending a national meeting of the federation of clubs came up with the idea of celebrating the poet's birthday with school children. She introduced a resolution to that effect abd the idea of a birthday celebration came to life in 1911. The momentum reached its pike in 1912 when Riley was honored by 2000 children at Lockerbie Street and he came to Greenfield where his car was parked at the Courthouse and passing children threw flowers. Riley was present with a silver loving cup purchased by Professor Frank Larabee and presented by Jessie Milikan's grandson George B. Walton. It was said that years 1,000,000 children from coast to coast participated in the celebration. In 1913, Anderson, Indiana State University and Cincinnati conducted Riley Days. In 1915 Columbus Indiana celebrated Riley Days. In 1915 Riley came to Greenfield and sat on his fron porch with his family's sisters, brother, nephew Ed Eitel, and with his mother's cousin, William R. Hough and the Hough family as children marched by with flowers and threw the blossoms at the poet.

The poet's last birthday was celebrated Oct. 7, 1915. at an event which happened in Indianapolis. It which included an afternoon festival of Riley poetry set to music and danced in pantomine. In the evening a dinner was hosted by former Vice President Charles Wilson Fairbanks. Speakers included Governor Ralston, William Allen White, George Ade and former Senator Beverage and Senator Kern. In addition Secretary of the Interior Franklin K. Lane suggested to various school superintendents that one of Riley's poems be read in each school house. Indiana Governor George Ralston proclaimed Riley Days state wide. Later that years Riley spent the winter and spring in Miami. Riley Days was also celebrated in Miami.

After 1915 the poet's birthday was celebration with different methods of marking the passing. The 1949 , the 100th anniversary was probably the largest in modern times. Enteratinment took place in front of the Courthouse and the tower of flowers becoming a local tradition. Riley days now focused around the Riley statue. In 1957 Frontier Days and sidewalk sales by merchants were held downtown. In 1959 100 children brought flowers to the statue and parade was led by the Greenfield High School band and the local fire department. This was the beginning of the children's flower parade, In time "Frontier Days" became "Sidewalk Days and then "Riley Days".

Enough. I have told you everything that i know and something's I don't. Talk to me.

2012-09-29

By Joe Skvarenina

I like to go out and look at history. Have you ever done it? One of the best places to go is Shirley Indiana. The folks at the Shirley Historical Society recently has their annual festival and they invited me to speak on Shirley History. It was real a great time. One gentleman who's name I didn't get gave me a set of envelopes from the the Shirley Diamond Jubilee from September 25 to October 3, 1965. Each was post marked from Shirley with a different 4 cents stamp and a theme for the day. They had King and Queen Day, Concert Day, Young Citizen Day, Farmer's Day, Ladies Day, Masonic Day, Old Settler's day, and Antique Car Day.

Author Thomas J. Schlereth gives interesting insight into the study of local history which he labels landscape history. As a matter of explanation, Schlereth defines archaeology as the work of researchers "who usually excavate the material remains of past cultures and through such evidence, attempt to recreate the history of man from the earliest past and to determine the nature of cultural systems at different times and places around the world." Schlereth goes to tell us, "above ground archaeologists, unlike the their below ground colleagues, dig into the past but usually on the surface ; they examine what they find before it is buried by time and chance. Above ground archaeologists can be called landscape historians. Landscape historians are intent at looking at objects, be they pot shards or service stations with an intense symptomatic and precise scrutiny that ultimately yields specific cultural information from single artifacts as well as braided cultural patterns." But like tree rings , the evidence of the past comes easily enough to hand but we need to see it, read it and explain it before it can be used as story- a narrative tradition of history. I do believe that Shirley is a good example of landscape history and a great place for the local historian to practice their craft..

For example the discovery of natural gas in Shirley offered as a inducement to factories as a result many factories moved to the town in the 1890's and the early 1900's. In fact in 1910 Shirley had a population of 1519. In 1897 the Chemical Works came to Shirley. the Indiana Bottle in 1899. The Banner Glass company in 1900, the Hosek Brothers Lamp Factory in 1902, the Baker Glass Company in 1902-03, the Shirley Radiator and Foundry Company 1901, and the Shirley Creosote Company had all operated in Shirley. At one time along Route 234 you could see concrete foundations of the factory that have been turned into a foundation for a barn. Did you know that the oldest church in town is the Shirley Methodist Church organized in 1895. The Shirley School in Henry County was constructed in 1921-2 and it was used for 10 years before the students were transferred to Kennard. In 1838 the first log school on the Hancock County side was built on the Edward Beeson Farm. In 1840 a frame school was built on the same lot. In 1893 it was blown down by a storm. It was replaced by another building the next year. A four room school house was built in Shirley in 1900. This building burned in 1907. In 1908 another building was built. all eight grades were taught there until 1936. At this point the eight grade was consolidated with Wilkinson and the first six grades continued to be taught at Shirley until 1959. At this point Shirley and Wilkinson Schools were consolidated. after that the first three grades were taught at Shirley until consolidation.

Early in the fall of 1902 the Mother of God Catholic church was established on the south edge of town. In 1903 the church had a membership of 130. In 1907 the church was closed and the beautiful stained glass windows, contents and bell was sent to St. Ann's at Mars Hill in Indianapolis and St. Rose in Knightstown.

Enough. I have told you everything that I know and some things I don't. Talk to me.

2012-09-22

By Joe Skvarenina

In 1885 Boyd's Grove was selected as the site of the Hancock County's Fairground. This is the current Hancock County's Regional Hospital property. There is a huge tree on the Hospital's southwest corner which was probably there when it was called Boyd's Grove. Many a political meeting or rallies were held at Boyd's Grove at the edge of town. I do believe that the "Great Commoner." William Jennings Bryan spoke at the Grove. Hancock County Fair had a race track at the site. I have been told when the workman were building the hospital they found the foundations of the old livestock barns. Eventually local Fannie Andis owned the twelve acres at the site. and donated it to the hospital. Mrs.. Andis's house was the one in which Dr. Elsbury has his practice located. Rumor has it that Mrs.. Andis would sit the area of the double picture windows and watch the hospital being built.

In the early days people would go to surrounding communities for hospital needs. I remember several friends telling me that they were born in the Shelbyville Hospital. According to a 1944 story, Mrs. Fannie Andis a well known county resident intended to purchase the old fair ground property for the construction of a hospital. According to Andis the site was conveniently located at the edge of the city and filled with old growth trees. In 1946 sufficient signatures were obtained to put a \$3000,000 bond issue on the ballot. A " Committee for the Hospital' was organized and consensus was built and this was proven by a vote of 8299 to 805 for the bond issue. In 1950 a cornerstone was dedicated on the site. Mrs. Nellie Lowe became the hospital first superintendent and chief nurse at an annual salary of \$4,800. She had supervised the opening of hospitals in five Indiana and Illinois communalities including Muscatatuck. After five years of planning and two of construction the Hancock memorial Hospital was dedicated on Sunday, December 2, 1951. Over 4,200 people attended the celebration. Governor Henry Schricker delivered the keynote address and Harry Martin, popular farm news editor from WFBM Radio station as the master of ceremonies. Patriotic singing was conducted by Lee Blazer of Lee Blazer Studios.

Fannie Andis died in 1972. She was also large benefactor for Earlham College. Mrs. Andis passed over her previous requirement that when erected her family names of Olvey-Andis be used as the name for the hospital. She did this when her investigations disclosed that the original resolution and petition to the Federal Government was made in the name of Hancock Memorial Hospital. To have changed this name though a small detail might have made it necessary to start the proceedings from the beginning and further delay the hospital. A long time friend told of Fannie's disappointment that the original proposal did not go forward. But she was generous to the Hospital to the very end.

One last unrealed item Linda Schaffer who is looking for information about the Apple's email is jim.shaffer07@comcast.net.

Enough. I have told you everything that i know and some things I don't. Talk to me.

2012-09-15

Olivia Lopez , " I have a few questions regarding an old 1800 farm house in Greenfield. My mom is Joan Lopez and we grew up in Greenfield and now live in Batesville .We were in town and thought we would look up information on the old farmhouse that I grew up in and my mom and dad owned. We went to the court house there in Greenfield and we looked in the old books on who all the past owners and found the dated back to 1864. We really want to try to find out more the house. The address is 1440 South 400 East. It is located in Center Township. We have many stories about it and experienced a lot of "interesting things" in this house and just really want to learn more about the history. We spoke to a young woman at the court house who gave us your name."

Olivia goes on to tells us," some of the past owners were: Jesus & Ysidra Lopez (my grandparents), then a Robert Parish, a Duncan, then some Insurance Farm places, followed by a Patten, Charlotte Coffield, Jacob Catt, W.B & Benjamin Price, a Bill Shaffer, even a Hunt or a Griffith. This all goes back to the mid 1800's." Olivia's mother tells that there are twin maple trees in the front yard and the place could have been called "Twin Maples" when Charlotte Coffield owned the home.

Olivia, I looked in the " Hancock County Interim Report of Indiana Historic Sites and Structures" and it unfortunately goes only to 200 South. The 1887 atlas of Hancock County shows that Jacob Catt owned the property at least in 1887. it was 273.3 acres and it was close to the corner of Morristown Pike. The Binford History of Hancock County tells that Charlotte Coffield in 1915 paid \$247. in property taxes.I did find in the "Biographical Memoirs of Hancock County" that Jacob Catt was born in Mad River Ohio on October 5, 1821. He built a log cabin on 40 acres of section 10 in Hancock County. He lived there until 1888. Eventually he owned 1123 acres with about 1000 in cultivation in Blue River, Center and Brandywine Townships. He was married twice and his second wife was first married to Charles Coffield. Does anyone else know about the Twin Maples property?

Well enough. I have told you everything that i know and somethings I don't. Talk to me

2012-09-15

By Joe Skvarenina

Wes Blue writes," As a wee lad in the 1950s, and into the 60s, the building on the southeast corner of North and State Streets was occupied by a men and boys clothing store called Rody's. (For the life of me I can't remember any of the occupants of the building between Rody's and Ashley's Carpet.) I also recall a baby clothing store immediately to the south.

Rody's was a direct competitor to the more upscale Car-Macs, which was named for the Carmichael and McClarnon families who owned it. I believe the Carmichael was Keith McClarnon's father-in-law. Keith ran the store and lived right next door on North Street. " Rody's was owned by Don Jenkins according to the people who talk to me.

Larry Sherman writes,"...I was referring to the corner of the building on the southeast corner on the southeast of North and State Streets, I have seen photos of the Jeffries and Son Livery on the southeast corner." In addition in 1922 the Greenfield City Directory shows a listing for O.H. Monger Ford, 25 North State which is the old address of the Ashley's Carpet site. Larry took pictures of the horse stalls remnants of the livery. Larry goes on to tell at the site he found some advertizing for 1930's Fords.

I went to another used book sale the other day and found an autographed copy of "Fortunes in Friendship" by Barton Rees Pogue and illustrated by Will Vawter. It was printed in 1926 and autographed in 1934. You might wonder who is Barton Rees Pogue?

Humorists and poet. Barton Rees Pogue was reared in Greenfield. He became famous in the 1920's for broadcasting peoples' poems for 12 years Radio Station WLW in Cincinnati. He taught speech at Taylor University. He quit high school as sophomore to become a printer's clerk in Mitchell's shop in Greenfield where his first book was published. In 1917 he won the first prize in the National Intercollegiate Prohibition Oratorical Contest. The family home was on North Spring Street and was at one time the home of Mayor Pat Elmore.

Pogue also wrote for the Indiana Farmers Guide, the McClure Newspaper Syndicate, Indianapolis Times, Good Housekeeping and Ideals. He published six books like the one I found at the used book sale.

By the way I just finished a post card history of Hancock County and it will be available after the first of the year more details later. It is another Arcadia series. Also I am working on the history of the Hancock County Sheriff's Department, if you have anything of interest let me know.

Enough. I have told you all that I know and some things I don't. Talk to me.

2012-09-08

By Joe Skvarenina

Ted Ferrell has an "Old Settlers Meeting" ribbon dated August 9, 1884 in Evansville. I cannot find out anything about that particular meeting. But Samuel Harden in his book, "The Pioneer" tells us, "The custom of holding old settlers meetings, inaugurated in Eastern Indiana..." In 1856 one was held between Pendleton and Huntsville. For several years in the 1870's people from Madison and Hamilton Counties held a joint meeting, on the county line, just west of Perkinsville. It was reported that these meetings were reasonably well attended. But after that no "Old Settlers Meeting" were held in the area for eight to ten years. In 1873 an "Old Settlers Meeting" was held near Alexandria and it was very well attended. At this particular meeting there were many speeches about old times. In 1874 another meeting was held at Perkinsville. One was held at Ruddle's Grove in Anderson on August 30, 1894. Three thousand people attended and the Lapel Band furnished excellent music. Our own Judge David Gooding was a speaker. He dealt on the progress the community has made since the early day, over pole bridges he rode on horseback the circuit of appointments to hold court. Gooding warned people about living too fast and urged the importance of protecting the county at the polls. Another meeting was held in the Grove on August 29, 1895. It was not very well attended.

These meetings gave settlers the opportunity to talk about the old times. Eventually all the old settlers died and not many records were kept of the speeches. So a lot of good history was missed. Does anyone know about the "Old Settlers Meeting's" ?

Delma Scott told me she found an old clipping book in her in laws attic. Its an old ledger book in which someone pasted newspaper clippings of the world's fair, various political items, and stories about Annie Oakley. The clippings date from the 1880's and 1890's and the scrapbook was done by an old gentleman who rented a room from the family. I do believe that people at the times kept scrapbooks of clippings in other books or anything they might have found available for them to use. They are interesting and so you should see if you have any settings around. By the way Annie Oakley was from Greenville Ohio and there is a museum there.

Janelle Miller tells, "I don't anything about Mr. Black but I have the trunk he used to carry his belongings across the world." Janelle goes on to add that the trunk has his initials and the his Douglas Street address. Janelle thanks for sharing that is great find. By the way Black's home is for sale and it is a fantastic place.

Enough. I have told you everything that I know and somethings I don't. Talk to me.

2011-04-20

by
Joe Skvarenina

Do you know why State Rd 9. Is called the Highway of the Vice Presidents? Many of the United States Vice Presidents were from Indiana and lived in communities along the Highway. For example Thomas hendricks was from Shelbyville. The other day I was Columbia City in Whitley County and discovered that Thomas Riley Marshall, Woodrow Wilson's Vice President ,was that community.

The Marshall Family, his father and grandfather, were democrats. His grandfather was county clerk when Andrew Jackson was organizing the party. Both his grandfather and father stood by the party during the unpopular Civil War days, even yielding their church membership in preference to the party

In Marshall's book, " A Hoosier Salad" he mentions a Methodist minister threatened to strike the Marshalls off the church rolls if they continued to vote Democratic and how his grandfather replied that he was willing to take his chance in hell but never in the Republican party. Marshall's father preferred to join his wife's church, the Presbyterian. Thomas Marshall's most famous quote was, "what this country needs is a good five cent cigar." Like another Riley we know Marshall like to frequent the local water hole. When Calvin Coolidge was elected as Vice President under Warren Harding Marshall sent him his condolences.

Donald Short writes , 'My family lived behind Dr. Larrabee...Our neighbors to the south were also Dr. Tom Larrabee and his wife Nellie. He was a Veterinarian. They were great neighbors... Dr. Larrabees and his wife Audrey lived right across from the New Palestine Bank on U.S. 52 in the big two story house now painted pink and cream colors. To the east of the big house sits a small house painted the same color...The door to this little building opened to a small waiting room which had a small window so you could talk to the receptionist...As I recalled from cleaning the office for Doc most of his meds were mainly in liquid form, displayed on shelves in big tall brown apothecary bottles...Audrey paid me 50 cents an hour, Eventually she also hired my brother Richard for 35 cents an hour. When Richard asked why she paid me more...her reply...Richard, 'Donald works harder...' When I turned 16 and got my license, I chauffeured Doctor Larrabee when he made his calls to St. Vincent's Hospital on the north side of Indianapolis...Dr Larrabee and Audrey were the most wonderful couple I have ever known. My Aunt Marie lived with them for many years as a housekeeper and they took care of her until she died. While Dr. Larrabee was in the House of Representatives' and the Senate , my Uncle Sidney Wilkins and his wife drove them back and forth and stayed with them in Washington, D.C. helping with whatever they needed done...My dad bought Dr. Larrabee's, 1941 Buick and we drove it to California to see me where I was stationed at El Toro marine Corp Base..."

Thanks , Donald Short for some wonderful recollections.

2011-04-16

by
Joe Skvarenina

Ryan Brown an Associate Professor at Illinois State University writes,

"Nancy Leach, a Hancock County genealogist, emailed me a copy of "Amateur sleuth finds family connection to famous outlaw" article that appeared in the Daily Reporter back in January 2011. I am just now finding time to follow up on this.

My name is Ryan Brown. I am a professor at Illinois State University in Normal, Illinois. My maternal grandfather was Charlie Snider, who grew up on the Snider farm near Cumberland, Indiana. He met my grandmother while she was a student at UIndy (ICC back then), and he moved to southern Indiana early in their married life. I grew up near French Lick, Indiana.

Nevertheless, my genealogy bug kicked in a few years ago, and I discovered the Snider Cemetery in Hancock County. As far as I read, the article you have written is accurate.

My grandfather Charlie was proud of two family members... His second cousin John Dillinger, and his great-grandfather Joseph "Rooster" Chapman. One of Adaline's brothers, Jacob Snider, married Joseph's daughter Rebecca. I have a great picture of Jacob and Rebecca. I think Rebecca's sister also married a Snider brother.

In the past year, I have stopped in to Hancock County to visit the Snider cemetery, see the Historical Rooster Marker, visit with Tom Williams, historian lawyer, and explore some of my Snider roots. (Adaline's tombstone is overturned, and has been for over a year)and

I WOULD BE VERY INTERESTED IN COMMUNICATING WITH HANCOCK COUNTY CONNECTIONS TO THE SNIDERS OR CHAPMANS.

I have a little website for family members about the Sniders, wherein I wrote my own Dillinger and Rooster stories.....

www.itilstu.edu/~brown/snider (Link subject to change in the near future, but works for now. Professor Brown's email is rkbrown@ilstu.edu)

2011-04-09

by
Joe Skvarenina

Ray Richardson writes," perhaps I can add something to your column on roads. In my time as County Attorney from 1969, I have learned that many early county roads were laid out under three laws now repealed: The County Unit Law, The Township Line Road Law and the 1905 Highway Act.

In general terms, landowners (almost always farmers) petitioned the county commissioners to establish a road across their property. The commissioners would appoint a committee to investigate and make recommendations. The commissioners could then by resolution establish the road, including its beginning, end and width.

This information was not recorded, so it can be found only by examining the old commissioners' minute book. Since the width varied between 30 feet, 33 feet (two rods) and 40 feet, these records do have to be occasionally found. I remember one, a part of which is now CR 100S, that was established while the Battle of Gettysburg was being fought.

With luck, one road petition would connect to another one established earlier, and later the road would be continued on(or not), which explains why many roads do not continue through to the county line." I find this interesting. While we were at it what does anyone know about the old Napoleon Trace which ran through Charlottesville and Blue River Township?

Carol Larrabee tells her husband was a nephew of Dr. Larrabee. She goes on to indicate that Dr. Larrabee lived on Esat Main Streeet in New Palestine and his home along with his office next door is west of Y-Not Pizza.

Paul Overhauser found this photo of a camel on parade in Greenfield. Paul, i don't know what was going on. It was probably some type of community celebration probably around 1895. But I did find the photo.

2011-04-04

By

Joe Skvarenina

>

Ty Hite writes" Loved the picture in your article, both the Umbenower and Fuqua's are my

> family. They are on my Mom's (Roma Sharrett-Hite-Smith) and her Dad's

> (Forrest O. Sharrett (the greatest Grandpa ever)) side of the family. Mary

> Umbenower was my great Aunt and Redi Fuqua was my great Grandmother. From

> what I know, my family was the original owners of the building located at

> State Road 9 and Eden Road (as marked on the picture).

>

> Also, from what I know from my Mom, the building in the picture of your

> article, burned down when she was as a small girl, maybe mid to late

> 1930's. The building that stands today looks just like the original

> building except it is brick instead of clapboard. That is the building I

> know and grew up around.

>

> My Dad worked as a worker and proprietor of the second building between

> 1948 and 19667. Jack Hite (my Dad) ran Hi-Par Market with his partner Rich

> Parker, and attempted to buy back the building from Fred Pope, who had

> bought the building from my great Aunt, Mary Umbemower, who lived in the

> house across from the store (on 9), which was later occupied by (uncle) Ed

> Bradley. This was a great general store, fresh cut meat, cheese, dry

> goods, hardware, and even some clothing. There were even gas pumps out

> front. This was Wal-Mart before Wal-Mart was a concept. Unfortunately,

> 19667 and on, was about the time the grocery store chains started to become

> popular. Yes, Marsh, AGI, and Kroger put businesses like my Dad's out for

> good. No hard feelings, I shop at Wal-Mart.

>

> As far as the question about the blacksmith shop behind the store, I would

> say it was part of the original structure, not what is there now. There is

> a small brick structure behind the current building, along the alley that

> goes by the former Warner Tire Service, but I don't believe that is the

> blacksmith shop. Grandpa Sharret always called that the slaughter house

> (for the fresh cut meats and sausage, I don't know)." This is great information.

>

> Ty goes on to write " Now, can you help me with something?

>

> I have been looking for many years for a picture of my Dad standing in

> front of this building with my Grandma, Lena Hite-Walker-Jackson, Roy

> Bundy, Patsy Stevenson, and Roberta McKee that was in the back

> advertisement section of he Hancock Central year books in the 1960's. I've

> looked at the Library, and there is a collection there donated in the

> memory of Jack Hite, but none have the picture I'm looking for."

Can anyone help Ty with this photo? Ty tahksn for the great information, Your dad wrote soemthing on Hancock County Indians, didn't he?

2011-04-02

by

Joe Skvarenina

Leonard Meyer, a member of St. James Lutheran Church writes, "I farmed with horses & a Model B John Deere until I was drafted into the Army in 1952. We got the tractor when I was Freshman in high school and my dad had to quit farming due to ill health. Prior to that we had six horses that Dad & I used to farm with. Incidentally, this was in South Dakota. The farmer in the photo in the Reporter is on a mower. I used one of those a lot." By the way the writer of this article realizes the horses in the Reporter photo were not draft horses.

Sarah Richardson writes, "I am looking for a copy of the 'War of the Worlds' report that the Daily Reporter carried in October or November 1938. The library doesn't have to roll anymore. My mother had a copy in her album which is now missing. Does anyone have a copy of this piece?

Doug Addison writes, "I have lived in the Cleveland Charlottesville area all my life and have wondered how Grandison Road got its name. I know there was a County Commissioner in the 50's or 60's who was named Grandison. I think that's who the Road is named after? Does anyone know for sure. I do believe that Bruce Grandison was the County Auditor wasn't he? What's the history of that road?"

Vernon Threlkeld writes, "I have found that several relatives who lived in Indianapolis in the 1920's and 1930's journeyed to Greenfield to get married. Were there any local requirements that may have facilitated quickie marriages?" The short answer is probably not. But in the 1940's Omer Stokes Jackson, Indiana's Attorney General, local attorney from Greenfield and Tom Williams grandfather put the stop to quickie marriages in Lake County. Also in the 1870's Fortville was a wide open town. Neither of these dates match what you want but it is the best that I can do.

Megan Reilly Koepsell writes, "I am researching family genealogy, and my great great grandfather, Lawrence Reilly moved to Greenfield with his wife Catherine sometime after 1858. At that time Lawrence had three children Bridget, Dennis and Michael by his first wife Mary and a son, Joseph with Catherine. Two more children were born in Greenfield: Ellen in 1863 and Daniel James on October 1, 1865. The family moved back to Niagara Falls by July 1870 when they showed in the census there. The oldest daughter married John Furry from Hancock County and they settled in Sugar Creek Township to farm and raise their family. Michael moved back to Greenfield with Bridget sometime in the 1920's after Michael died..." Furry Road comes to my mind. Does anyone know anything about this clan? One other thing I would think about is maybe the jobs with the gas boom?

2011-03-26

By
Joe Skvarenina

Alberta Whiting Nelson writes,

"I read your article in the Jan.29 edition of the Reporter. There was another glass factory in Hancock County. My great grandmother Katrina Hosek and her 7 sons owned and operated a glass factory in Shirley, Indiana. I am in Florida for the winter and cannot give you accurate dates, but it would have been early 1900's. It was located near where Metal Tech (the old Kraft Cheese Factory) is now. This would be on the west side of Shirley. They were known as the 7 Hosek Brothers. They blew glass chimneys for lamps mostly. Grandmother Hosek migrated to this country through Canada with her 7 sons and 2 daughters. Her husband died and is buried in Nova Scotia, Canada. They first settled and worked in Elwood, In. before going to Shirley. My Grandmother Anderson was one of the daughters and she and her husband Ed Anderson owned and operated Anderson's Grocery in Shirley which was located diagonally across from the Christian Church until about 1945. Before her marriage Grandmother was the bookkeeper for the Glass Factory."

Kathy Flink did a paper on gas wells in Hancock County and she wrote an interesting paper which included other facts. For example there were 739 wells were drilled in Greenfield with the first one being drilled April 1887 on West Fifth Street. Forty three gas companies were formed in the county. Often neighbors would get together and form a gas company to provide themselves with heating or cooking gas for example the Shiloh Natural Gas Company. In 1888 the City of Greenfield offered free gas and land to anyone who would locate in the city. There was a Greenfield Board of Trade to promote manufacturing. Some of those manufacturing concerns included two window glass factories, one fruit jar factory, one bottle factory, one rolling and nail mill factory, one stove factory, one chair factory, a creamery, a foundry, two planing mills, lumber companies, one ice factory as well as two brick yards. The Greenfield Fruit and Bottle Works started in 1887 and in 1897 it was called Holloway and Reese Bottle Works and before it closed it was known as Owens Bottle Company. Nothing was made at the site after 1913. In 1923 the building was destroyed by fire. The current site is the West side Hardees. There was an East side bottle works between the National Road and the railroad tracks on Morristown Pike. The area was known as strawboard hill.

2011-03-12

By Joe Skvarenina

I was going through some files for the Lutheran Service Club and came across an introduction for William Lowell Toms a figure from Hancock County Historical past. It seems in 1957 he was the guest speaker at a meeting.

According to the introduction Tubby Toms, also known as William Lowell Toms wrote a column for the Indianapolis News entitled "Out in the Open" which covered about everything in book. When he graduated from Depauw, one of the Professor's described him as possession "greater accumulation of useless information" than anyone who ever came out of that institution. His repetiior consisted of operating a bulldozer on the the site of Sheraton Lincoln Hotel, teaching school in Rockford Illinois, service in the Air Corps in France in WW I, and recipient of bachelor of literature degree columbia University. He detests telephones.

When in France he was one of the founders of the Air Corps first publication, "Flights and Landings," and worked for a time as a reporter on the Richmond Palladium before coming to the News.

He came to work at the News in 1920. His great love of the outdoors was manifested on his first visit to the News in quest for a job. He was hired and told to go to work at once, but said he couldn't because he had "a date to go rabbit hunting." His stories about his dog, Roxey, his goat, Tink, his cats --Susie, Tige, Junior, Flash, and Fudge__ and his "scotch-fried Angus calves, Pat and Mike, have been literary gems According to some Tubby's presence alone is reason enough to live in Hoosier land.

He served as a Statehouse and political reporter from 1923 to 1945 He was the News Correspondent on the Presidential candidates trains across the nation with Landon, Roosevelt, Willkie and Dewey. But with all the celebrities, Tubby's interest in the outdoors continued. On one train from Indiana to Southern California on the Willkie Train he says he counted 1,100 pheasants. And in Oregon, he saw 11 mule deer - the kind with the long ears.

Toms was quoted as saying, "I wish every boy and girl could have the experience I did living on Six Mile Creek." Tubby says, "Well I remember the time I caught a string of fish my Barlow knife I cut

a twig from the cottonwood tree, stuck it in the ground, and there hung my string of fish.. While I roamed, a turtle ate my fish. But that cottonwood sprouted and today a 80 foot tree stands --near Carthage. Tubby and his wife Adeline, loved antiques...and their home was furnished with beautiful period pieces..

But Toms reserved a big corner in their summer kitchen for hunting and fishing equipment. He was known the Dean Indiana Outdoorsmen.

He donated the Nameless Creek Youth camp to the community.

2011-03-08

By
Joe Skvarenina

Alberta Whiting Nelson writes,

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2011-03-05

by

Joe Skvarenina

The Anderson Library called the other day and asked if I wanted some old diaries written by William j and Mary Keaster written from 1904 circa 1939. This couple lived a farm in the Fortville area on Rural Route 2 and did business at the Maxwell Elevator. In most cases the books are a business listing of the farm couple's business activities during that time period. For example in 1904 farmer couple's total receipts were \$1171.13 and the total expenses were \$1500. The farm hand earned \$1.25 gathering corn all day. For two and one hours hoeing weeds in the corn one received 25 cents. 1907 was better with total receipts for the couple being \$885.27 with expenses being \$524.65. In 1927 2020 lbs. of straw was sold \$9.50.

Do you like Riley Parl. It was dedicated in 1925 on Riley's birthday. During the ceremony three thousand children marched in the parade with flowers or a flag. There were also many speakers and floats. East Greenfield School won an award for 100% participation. By the summer of 1929 Riley Park became very popular. On one Sunday afternoon 500 people enjoyed reunions on the slope. The Park was established around the supposed site of the "old swimmin hole". Greenfield Kiwanis was the leadership in early days to improve the Park. on July 4, 1930 a swimming pool was built in the Park. In 1931 the Greenfield Federation of Women's Clubs built the current shelter.

2011-02-19

By
Joe Skvarenina

Nathan Bilger writes " I believe the First National Bank of Fortville was located at 12 S Main St. As I understand it, the bank merged with GReenfield Banking Company in 1965. The building still stands, with a modern facade I presume was added by Greenfield Banking Company.

The Fortville State Bank was located farther south on Main Street, and operated from 1891 until closing in 1931. I believe it was located at 106 S Main St; that building still stands as well.

Bill Hamm goes on to tell us that the 1928-1929 Polk's Gazetteer tells us The the First national Bank of Fortville had deposits pf \$25,000. J.F. Johnson was President and H.S.Adams, Vice President and Orville L. Morrow was the Cashier. Does any else know anything about the First National Bank?

Walt Adams writes, Greenfield the county seat of Hancock County was laid out in 1828 by commissioners appointed for that job by the State Legislature in 1828-1829. The land form which Greenfield was carved was entered in 1826-27 and the original lot areas was donated by Cromwell Meek, Benjamin Spellman and John Wingfield. The name Greenfield was suggested by Samuel Vangreder, Elisha Chapman, and John Hunter. But no one knows why they suggested that name. Greenfield was incorporated as a town in 1854 and as a city on May 8, 1876.

Tom Willets shares with us some photos of old Philadelphia from his mother in laws trunk. Did you know that Philadelphia was laid out April 11, 1838. The Dayton and Indianapolis stage passed east and west daily though the town on the National Road. Philadelphia had thriving inns and taverns important to the westward movement of the Conestoga Wagons.

2011-02-12

by
Joe Skvarenina

Did you every wonder why Fortville Pike and other roads take the route that they do? I thought they covered the original wagon paths.

Graham Richardson writes about the oddities with local roads..." I had these thoughts on your questions about the various oddities in some of the local road and highway alignments.

The Congressional Land Survey system (exact date not recalled, but mid-1800s?) was the original rectangular land layout that produced the township and range land description system (with each "township" divided into 36 sections, each a mile square, more or less) that later was the source of the various county road alignments...all those roads north, south, east, and west of the "center" of things. The various small offsets in the road intersections are those where the curvature of the Earth does not allow for a perfect fit of square land divisions as the rows of squares were originally located, each succeeding one north of the previous row. A facsimile Indiana county atlas from 1876 shows the rectangular road pattern pretty much as it is today, the only exceptions being a few road portions later abandoned, and new routes that came about with the advent of motorized vehicles (that could climb straight over certain hills that horse teams could not negotiate the same way). Any "angled" roads might well have been left over from pre-settlement animal traces, or the fact that (pre-survey) travel between settlements often just took the path of least distance, and might have been kept later if it was popular enough; old SR 13 from Greenfield to Fortville, and Morristown Pike (still existing) between Greenfield and Morristown are two such examples.

An Indiana road guide book from 1917 (before the establishment of numbered highways) described the route from one town to another as a seemingly never-ending series of right- and left-hand turns along the section line roads, navigating by local landmarks such as schools, cemeteries, and the (then) few short paved stretches of roads. Later formalization of the state and federal highways (1920s) gave the present-day numbers to those routes and, as road usage standards were upgraded through the 1930s to the 1950s, curves were added in many places to "smooth" out the previous right-angle turns. I have a state road map from that era which plainly shows many, many right-angle offsets on those early highways. Anyone currently 60 or older will almost certainly remember the many tight turns on old Indiana State Road 13 when it used to start at US Highway 40 in Greenfield and extend to Fortville (today it merely starts at Fortville)."

2011-02-05

By

Joe Skvarenina

John Kessler writes," Adaline Lancaster was a Snider. Lancaster was her married name. she was the daughter of Isaac Snider and Leah Snider they were married on December 1, 1806 in Virginia. Isaac was 45 years old and Leah was 40 when they came to Indiana in 1833. Isaac and Leah had 9 children 7 boys two girls. Adaline was one of them. The land was willed to the cemetery by Isaac. Bob Snider was my grandfather my mother's father and he researched this before he died, and this was in my family history. I also have a couple of questions for you... which Indians was in Eden on Big Sugar Creek? because I have a good size collection of Indian rocks I have found in the field across from the creek. and I am also wondering if there was any way to find out when my great-great grandfather's blacksmith shop was opened it was behind the general store on the corner of Eden and SR 9. his name was John Kessler and he was the local blacksmith and I know his store was opened up before the Civil War was started because he fought in the Civil War and returned after spending two years in Andersonville."

John I believe there was an Indian Village or a trading post on Big Sugar Creek. I think they were Delaware. Does anyone know of anything different? Also does anyone know about a blacksmith shop in Eden? I know that Eden was originally platted as Lewisburg on August 25, 1835. Orville Baity was the original merchant in town. Lee Justice and Umberbower's were the merchants in later years. I believe that the building is still there. Was there a blacksmith shop behind it?

Gary Wright wants to know if anyone knows anything about a Flax Mill on the east side. It was built in 1875 and was two stories. The name connected with the mill was Kammack. It later burned down and was rebuilt as a single story. What do you know about the flax mill? Is the building still in there?

2011-02-03

By

Joe Skvarenina

I do believe everyone has a famous relative Larry Arnold tells us about his. It was Dr. William H. Larrabee. What do you know about him? Larrabee was born on a farm near Crawfordsville on February 23, 1876. At the age of nine his family moved to Reedville now called Carrollton. He attend Indiana Central Normal and Indiana State. From 1889 to 1895 he taught public school in New Palestine. In 1898 he began his practice of medicine in the community In 1904 when Dr. Neier moved away , Dr. Larrabee took over the office they had shared together. In 1908 Dr. Larrabee owned the second automobile in Hancock County and the first in Southern Hancock County. House calls were made by horse and carriage prior to this time. He was a member of the State House of Representatives from 1923-1925. He was elected to the United State Congress from 1931-1943. In 1942 he was defeated for re-election and returned to New Palestine to practice medicine. He was also a member of the New Palestine Board and was involved in the dedication of the New Palestine School built in 1920. He practiced medicine until the time of his death on November 16, 1960. He was 90 years old at the time.

Do any of you remember Dr. Larrabee or the location of his office?

So today is my birthday, 63, and I am beginning to feel as old as the history I write about. I remember in the early 1950's my family went to Tiffin and Fostoria in Ohio to see my great Uncle Howard Halter. He was a farmer and cultivated about 300 acres of muck land around the Toledo area. The soil was rich and black and he farmed it with Belgian draft horses. I can remember him walking behind the team. To this day. I do believe that this breed could weigh between 1,600 to 2,400 lbs. Did you ever farm with horses?

2011-01-29

Jean Wilfong Howell writes, "was there ever a glass plant in Hancock County?" If not, how did the Gas Boom impact Hancock County. "

There was one glass company in Hancock County and probably more. The Greenfield Bottling Company later bought out by Ball Co. was at the location of the Hardees on the east side of Greenfield. A milk bottle marked Greenfield is well worth the purchasing price today. In addition when the Hardees was constructed much gas was found.

About the Gas Boom, in 1886 the first natural gas company was called the Greenfield Gas Company. An 1888 article in the Hancock County Democrat estimates that one thousand men were employed in gas related jobs, Greenfield and surrounding Hancock County communities . The gas companies offered fuel, free gas and land incentives to new businesses. The gas boom in Hancock County was from 1887-1915. The Greenfield Gas Company in later days was operated by Miss Martha Beckenholdt. Gas was discovered in Hancock County on May 3, 1887. Following the initial discovery about 43 companies were established in the county. By the way ,the first well was on West Fifth Street.

Did you know that in 1919 Greenfield had 15 churches. An African American ME Church had a membership of 100. I do believe it was at the location of Dave's Meat Market. Does anyone know any of the details of the African American Church or African American community in Greenfield.

2011-01-22

By

Joe Skvarenina

Matt Dinger writes, "I am a coin and currency dealer in the Lawrence area. I recently bought a piece of currency from The First National Bank of Fortville and am writing an article about the note, the bank, and my connection to the town and Hancock county. I was wondering if you had any further information about the bank besides what is listed in *"History of Hancock County, Indiana: its people, industries and institutions"*?"

It looks like the bank was chartered in 1906 and then fell victim to the depression.

Any idea where the bank was located? Any Idea if the original building is still standing." Can any of you assist Matt please let me know.

Mark Galbreath provides us with the above photo taken by Henri Breeson in Greenfield in 1960. It was of republican headquarters. Do any of you recognized thr location? I do believe it is the building next to the old Pickets Hardware. What you think?

Blair Frye lives at 734 W. Main Street which was the old Nyles White homestead. It was probably built in the 1920's 1930's. Do any of you know of the history of the structure?

I recently had me hip replaced at Hancock Regional and with subsequent therapy Regency Place. That was my first experience with major surgery at the site. My thanks to Dr. Eaton the nurses, and especially the CNA's at both locations who helped my recovery. Fanny Andis used to sit in her house which is Dr. Elsbury's office and watch the progress on the completion of the hospitality. That is why there are two picture window's on Elsbury's building. I do believe she donated the property which was Boyd's Grove or the old 4H Fairground. I would like to know about Andis what do you know?

The Hoosier Heritage Magazine in this edition has an interesting story about Marjorie Main? She was born in Acton and she was Ma Kettle from the Ma and Pa Kettle movies plus others. Her movie debut was in 1931. Her father was the Pastor of the church in Acton. her last role was in the television series "Wagon Train". Her real name was Mrs. Mary Tomlinson Krees. The Franklin Township Historical Society has some interesting items on her. She died in 1975.

2011-01-15

by
Joe Skvarenina

Sharon Kingen writes, "... I continue to do genealogy work from home, amateur though I am. I have some family connections with the Sniders and have researched the family to a limited extent although I am sure that there are other people who have more direct ties who have studied the family in more depth. They may well have better information than I have, but according to what I have turned up, Adaline Lancaster was the daughter of Isaac Snider and Elizabeth Leah Watkins. From what I have examined, I believe that she was their youngest child. Leah died in 1838. Adaline's tombstone says that she was born in 1832, but census records show that she was born about 1828. In either case, she would have been a young child when her mother died. Her stepmother, Mary Collins, would have been the "mother" she probably knew better. Adaline married Francis H. Lancaster 17 May 1849 in Hancock Co., IN. Francis was a blacksmith. Apparently he had a shop in Cumberland or that general vicinity for quite some time. They appeared in the censuses in Marion Co. from 1850 through 1880. Most of those years they were recorded as living in Cumberland. Francis died in 1896. Adaline lived on in Indianapolis and appeared in the 1900 and 1910 censuses there. Francis and Adaline had 12 children although 1 died before 1900 and another died between 1900 and 1910. Adaline died in 1913. Adaline and Francis are of some special interest because their youngest child, Mary E. Lancaster, married John Wilson Dillinger. They were the parents of THE John Herbert Dillinger. However, Mary died when John was only about 4 years old. He would have been about 10 when Adaline (his maternal grandmother) died. I find it somewhat ironic that Mary Lancaster/Dillinger's younger brother David Lancaster was recorded in the 1910 census as being a city detective in Marion Co. I can't help but wonder how the family must have felt about having both a policeman and a notorious criminal in the family. Well, that's what I believe about the family connections. If Mrs. Lee or others would like to discuss the family further, I can be reached at sakingen@hrtc.net."

David Youngs, Dwight Smith also confirm this story. Marlena Wright tell us to look on page 166 of Sue Bakers Tombstone too to find further information.

Beth Bjorklund a Master's student in historic preservation from Ball State University wants to know more about the old county home. It has been torn down and it was at the location of I do believe the shooting range on east 40. In 1901 Oliie Rickey was the Superintendent and it consisted of 216 acres. State wide it was one of four county asylums which was self sustaining. In 1901 it had a large milk house with a cold stream of water running through powered by a gas engine. It also had a "commodius" slaughter house with furnace, large kettles and furnaces.

To Marlena Wright there was never a funeral home in McCordsville. I have run it up the flag pole with several people and have gotten the same response. Does anyone know anything different?

I am thinking about doing a book of old Hancock county post cards. What do you know about them. How many are out there?

2011-01-01

by

Joe Skvarenina

Greenfield was selected as the county seat by a legislative committee on April 11, 1828. It was ordered that "it shall be known and designated by the name of Greenfield." No reason for the name was ever given. Sixty acres for the new town were donated by Cornwall Meek, Benjamin Spellman, and John Wingfield. The original plat of Greenfield comprised of 161 lots and the public square which contained a pond where travelers washed their horses. This pond would have been on the current courthouse lawn. A few buildings including, Samuel Jackson's tavern, already dotted the old state road and near the new town's boundaries. Most of the early buildings were constructed of logs including the first courthouse built in 1829. In 1833 the following article appeared in the Indiana Gazetteer, "Greenfield is surrounded by a body of rich, fertile land and is very prosperous and flourishing...It contains two mercantile stores, two taverns, one lawyer, one physician and many craftsmen..." Two fires destroyed many, 1839 and 1857, destroyed many of the early farm buildings along Main Street. The first road running east to west through Greenfield was the old Centerville State Road. It was probably where South Street is today. The principal streets in town were Main and North Street. In the old days North Street was commonly called the "Back Street." Prior to the construction of the plank roads all streets were dirt. In 1850 the Indiana Gazetteer reported that Greenfield was a town with sixty residences and a population of 300.

Social life in the day recalled by one girl, "oh back then those days there wasn't nothing for you to do. The roads were mud and we only had horses and wagons to go in. We didn't go very much...we were busy at home. We went to schools and spelling matches and pie suppers and things like that...that's about all we had to do. Well we didn't think anything about walking two or three miles to a pie supper or anything. That was about the only way we had to go."

How about Potts ditch, Mrs. Permilia Thayer remembers had a clear recollection of a spring east of the Christian Church. It was in a hollow along a branch known as Potts Ditch. It ran across North Street near the end of Walnut Street. The hollow was filled from East North Street to the National Road. Oscar Meek who was born in the 1830's remembers when his mother and other women in town took their kettles to the branch because of the abundance of water and there did the family washing.

2010-12-18

by

Joe Skvarenina

Ada Coffin Headlee provides us with this photo of the 1933 Greenfield High School graduating taken at their 50th reunion taken in 1983. Ada is 93 years young and she wondering if any of you folks are still around? Ada has her own apartment and still goes to church sunday and she would like to talk to her classmates. Let me know.

During 1933 Omer Jackson, Tom Williams grandfather, attended the inauguration of Franklin Delano Roosevelt in Washington D.C. According to Williams it took the new President just seventy two words in a famous message to Congress to modify Volstead Act or prohibition. The first restaurant to receive permission to sell beer was Pony Frazier's Lunch Room on West Main Street. There ad said must be cold to be good." In the same year the 'Drys' of Hancock County were called to a meeting in the Memorial Building by Green Township Chairman of the movement Ernest Warrum. These folks were interested in retaining the 18th Amendment and wanted to run candidates on the state ticket.

Also in 1933 State Route 9 was paved to Shelbyville. In addition the Greenfield Athletic Field on Broadway was leased by thr state for a new highway garage. Daisy Barr of Indianapolis formally the friends minister in Greenfield reported the theft of a \$2000 diamond ring to the city police. Also in 1933 103 Greenfield businesses announced they were supporting FDR's National Recovery Act (NRA). Among the supporters included 11 barbers in Greenfield, two hat shops, Shackle and Mill Jones Shoe Shops, the Ol' Swimmin Hole Tavern, and Koin and Guthier's Dry Goods. Do any of you know the location of the Ol' Swimmin Hole Tavern?

2010-11-27

by.

Joe Skvarenina

America has a love affair with the automobile and the open road. I remember as a child we always take a ride on a Sunday afternoon. As teenagers we would go joyriding to no place in particular on Saturday night. As a young adult taking the baby for a ride was a good way to get the kids to go asleep. Regardless of the circumstance Americans love the open road whether it is the Lincoln Highway, Route 62, Route Old National Road or Route 40.

Did you know that the Old National Road was proposed by George Washington his Secretary of the Treasury Albert Gallatin in 1784. When they pondered the question "A way to the west- Where was the best way?" It was first financed by Congress in 1805 during the administration of Thomas Jefferson. It was our first Interstate Highway traveling through the states of Maryland, Pennsylvania, West Virginia, Ohio, Indiana and Illinois. The National Road or Old Route 40 played a serious role in America's "Manifest Destiny". It was over this route that Americans first went west. For 175 years and over 824 miles the National Road is a visible evidence of our history. The old National Road starts in Cumberland Maryland and ends at the old state capitol at Vandalia Illinois. The Road was opened in Hancock County during 1834-1835. One gang of men would cut the trees and another would remove the stump. A third would grade the road bed. Originally it was a dirt road with the bridges and the culverts being of stone. The larger streams like Sugar Creek, Six Mile, and Brandywine used wooden bridges. Mary Landis an early Innkeeper at Charlottesville counted ninety wagons moving west in one hour soon after the road had been opened. One fear of the early settlers on National Road was the Black Swamp west of Greenfield. This was the scene of many a robbery. Milestones would mark one's progress on the road. Two of the original ones can be seen on the Road between Richmond and Centerville. These markers would tell early settlers how far they were from the state line and the next town. We still use the expression of making a milestone when describing an important event in our lives. This expression comes from the road.

The Indiana section of the National Road was designated a State Scenic Byway in 1996 and a National Byway in 1998. There is a lot to see on the National Road or Route 40. It is worth the drive.

I include an old photograph of the Greenfield downtown on Route 40 probably late 1950's or early 1960's. Do you notice Ordies shoes and the S & S Dress Shop. This Main Street section of Old Route 40 has seen much change. I sure you can tell me other areas of change along Route 40.

2010-11-20

By

Joe Skvarenina

Phillip cooney writes, " I was born in Greenfield in 1938, out on School Street. My family moved away from there in 1952.

I still have a lot of family living in the Greenfield area. Some in Anderson. Indianapolis , Cunberland, Carthage, and other areas.

this past August my wife and I came back for the Cooney reunion. first one i've been to in 35 years. we figured no one would still be there, but my dads brothers family had over 80 people in attendance.

My father was custodian of the courthouse from 1944 unti 1952 and our living quarters were in the courthouse. if you come in from the east entrance the first doors on your right were our living room and bedrooms and directly acrosss the hall was our kitchen.

One of my jobs was every Saturday morning, I ,along with my brother or a friend would climb the stairs to the top of the courthouse and wind the clock. It was what they called an 8 day clock and had to be done every week. interesting thing was that the hands on the clock were made of wood and the pigeons woud set on the hands and as the week week by the clock would have different times on each facing

dependsing on how many pigeons were on the hands. we had to keep scaring them off.

I don't know if you know, but as you went down South Street towards Swope just before you reached the old cemetery there was a junk yard on the left. It took up the whole last block of South St.. We used to sell newspapers, cans, and bottles ther during the war and Mr. Solotkin would pay us. Could be some of the bottles you wrote about came from the area when they closed down.

Another one of my regular jobs was to keep all the lights in working order in the Tunnel that led under the street from the Jail to the courthouse so the could see to bring prisoners over for trial. I mowed the courthouse lawn and got to raise the flag every morning.

Fairs lunch room was a favorie eating place and Whiteys wet tenderloins were special.

I also delivered the Daily Reporter for about 3 yearsEnough for now. thanks for your time."

Cool stuff, Phil. Memories are important to all of us. Thanks for sharing.

i thought you folks might enjoy this photo of Pat Elmore and Walter Worland some years back. Walter didn't win but he ran a good race

2010-11-13

by
Joe Skvarenina

Rebecca Crowe from the Fortville-Vernon Township Public Libraray provides us with some very interesting information about Fortville and Cephas Fort which she used for her final paper in a library

genealogy class. The story goes like this Cephas and Benjamin Fort the two eldest sons of James came into Indiana stopping in the wilderness of Henry County in the early spring of 1819.

Cephas the founder of Fortville was 19 years old. The brothers entered land at \$1.25 per acre on the banks of Montgomery Creek three miles north of Knightstown. It was really wilderness at the time. After clearing a few acres the brothers put in corn but the birds and squirrels harvested most of the crop. In the fall they returned home to Ohio. In 1821 the enire family moved to Henry County. In 1825 Cephas married Anna Parkhurst and to this union was born nine children. In the 1830's or so the family moved to Hancock County. In 1849 Cephas platted the town. it was called Walpole.

The town's name was changed to Fortville to Fortville in December of 1865 in honor of Cephas Fort. In the 1949 Centennial Souvenir Program tells us, "entering the thriving town of Fortville today, one would scarcely recognize the little village of 'Walpole' of one hundred years ago. Instead of plodding through muddy roads where horses stand tied to the hitch racks, you car rolls over the smooth blacktop streets where the sidewalks are lined with beautiful trees and well-kept lawns of lovely homes."

At the end of the Civil War not more than half of the area's land was cleared but good climate and soil conditions attracted many settlers. Transportation was reliable as Fortville gained its railroad the Bee Line in 1849. For several years before the town of Fortville was laid out Thomas R. Noel served as postmaster and proprietor of a little store about a mile north and west of the current site of Fortville at a point called Phoebe Fort's Corner. In 1849 , the first business was a general store operated by Thomas R Noel. In 1855 the first flour mill was begun by brothers Thomas and Vance Noel. In 1860 Vernon Township cast their first ballots. Lincoln received 100 votes and Stephen Douglas received got 159 votes. According to one newspaper story of the time , "the 1870's were the rough and ready times in the town as there were eight saloons on Main Street. Brawls were held until saturday noon when a crowd would gather at the railroad tracks." In 1913 the gas lamps were replaced with electric street lights. Also during that time a water system was installed that improved fire protection.

Mr. HS. McCarty owned the town's first automobile. Band concerts were held in the gazebo south of town and other entertainment could be found at the Air Dome built in 1909 and at the Rialto movie theater. Fortville had a bovxng gym and later its own independent basketball team.

2010-11-06

by

Joe Skvarenina

The Franklin Township Historical Society shares with us a February 21, 1974 issue of the New Palestine Press which was operated by Victor and Barb Tucker. It is interesting to look at old newspapers and I do believe that is where the writing of local history begins. The 1974 issue reports that the construction of the New Palestine Lions Club Community Center is moving along nicely, the Smorgasbord on Friday at Zion Lutheran is \$3.50 per adults with children under 12 being 15 cents per year of age, student Gary Bardonner made Dean's list at Indiana University Dental College, Community Christian Church had a ground breaking for a Fellowship Hall, Shirley Riddle was seeking nomination as County Clerk, Richard Payne for Superior Court Judge, and Helen Call for Recorder.

The Hancock County Girl Scout House is located at 230 West North State Street in Greenfield. This house was built by Taylor Morford in 1900. According to some only the best wood was used in construction. It was said it had oak coal bins in the basement. The family was Catholic and was turned over to Clara Morford on March 30, 1930. Clara entertained the nuns and priest in the house on several occasions. He provided them with warmth in cold evenings. One of the times the nuns stayed upstairs at the house. The church next door which is still in existence was called St. Michael's. On August 23, 1934 Clara sold it to Indianapolis Ritter. Ritter sold it to Richard Lineback on March 5, 1957. Lineback turned it over to the City of Greenfield on February 24, 1958 with the proviso it be used by the Girl Scouts.

Judy Williams passes this website along

http://jameswhitcombriley.com/hamlin_garland_dialogued_withriley_1894.htm. Judy indicated that the article which is an interview between Hamlin Garland and Riley contains a reference of Griggsby Station as the Riley Old Home.

I ran into Pastor Gary last night President of World Renewal and we talked for a moment about John T. Hatfield. World Renewal is on the old Hatfield property. Gary's in-laws live in the old Hatfield House. Hatfield they say brought rocks from all his preaching sites to build that house. It is located near the old Gilboa Cemetery which is the Hatfield family cemetery although John T. Hatfield is buried in Hollywood California, Gilboa was a cemetery for Gilboa Methodist church long since gone. I do believe that you can see the outline of a foundation next to the burying ground.

Oh yes, John T. Hatfield was known as the "Hoosier Evangelist" because of his extensive traveling preaching at tent meetings. He was born on a Hancock County farm on August 8, 1851. Preacher Hatfield wrote two books. Do any of you have any of them?

2010-10-30

By
Joe Skvarenina

Philip Rihm writes, " I read your Oct 2nd article concerning President Harry S Truman being stopped by Trooper Carroll Mohr in Greenfield for speeding. I know Mr. Mohr as a neighbor while I was growing up in Greenfield, so when I read the article about him, I called to tell him about the it. He immediately vividly remembered the incident and told me all about talking to him. Mr. Mohr said he was working the scales on US 40 just east of Philadelphia and recognized he and Bess driving with Pres. Truman at the wheel, and that he was not speeding. Trooper Mohr pulled up beside him and motioned him to pull over and he did so at Max Zumwalt's Shell station. He commented that he was so nice to him, and that Bess went into the ladies' room while they talked. Another trooper arrived and took photos of the occasion. Mr. Mohr said he was in the Navy during WWII, ready to ship out to Japan, and he wanted to personally thank President Truman for ending the war and not having to go. Mr. Mohr said he asked him why he was driving himself, and he replied Bess wanted him to.

Don Lindsay also verifies this story about Truman. Mike Merlau says he has a cigar given to him by Lewis Strahl that says Truman for President.

Jack Grant comments about the 10-16 column. He says that the east-west interurban right away is on the southside of the former railroad right of way (row) in Maxwell. The electric high tension poll is on or beside the interurban right of way. "I looked at the satellite photo of the trestle from what I can tell it was for the interurban"

Nathan Bilger tells " You are right the concrete bridge along 400 E is from the interurban. There is an adjacent steel bridge immediately north of the concrete one that is a remnant of the railroad. You can see it from the north during the winter. The Interurban line was abandoned by the railroad in 1937. The railroad line was abandoned by Conrail in the mid 70's. Both lines have several bridges and bridge abutments remaining through the county, though most are not visible as the ones along 400 E. Also the interurban is also marked by electric interurban by telling power lines."

Nathan goes on to tell, "the bridges are private property. However the state bought former Penn Central ... stretches of the railroad from Mt. Comfort to Shirley are now owned by the state with the long term intentions of developing rail tails." Nathan also clarifies by telling the interurban depot and electric substation is now a residence at 24 W. Jackson Street in Maxwell.

2010-10-23

by
Joe Skvarenina

As you have probably read Bridgett Jones found the first long edition of the Daily Reporter while working at the th Riley Old Home. She noticed the name Smulyan in the newspaper. Jones tells us," I decided I would shoot in the dark and see if I could contact Jeff Smulyan about the Smulyan ad in the First Edition of the Daily Reporter. I sent an e-mail with an inquiry about the M.S. Smulyan mentioned in the first edition of the paper to a general contact e-mail at Emmis Communications...

I was pleasantly surprised when Jeff Smulyan called me on my cell and confirmed – that yes – the M.S. Smulyan was his Great-Uncle – Max Smulyan.

He said that the Smulyan family emigrated from Russia – Max and Jeff's Grandfather. They first came to Pennsylvania, and then moved to Indiana. Jeff said that his father was born in Princeton, IN – but that his grandfather and father eventually also moved to Greenfield in the 1920's. He said this was no doubt because – Max Smulyan was already here – as evidenced by the ad in the newspaper of 1908. He said that eventually his grandfather died shortly thereafter and the family moved to Indianapolis. He (Jeff) was born in Indianapolis. The Max Smulyan family eventually moved to California in the 1960's – which is where they remain."

Nice find, Bridgett. A few years ago I met Mrs. Sandra Borns of Union Station fame. Mrs. Borns indicated she had a soft place in her heart for Greenfield because her family the Solotkins lived here at one time. The Solotkins were a Russian Jewish immigrant family. Simon Solotkin Borns' grandfather operated a furniture store and junk yard on east Main Street. the junk yard is still there. The Solotkin home is on the corner of North and Spring Street. It is the current Richard Pasco residence. The Smulyans operated a poultry and egg business.

2010-10-16

by
Joe Skvarenina

Jim Webb writes, that he wants to know about the old cemetery on the south east corner of Swope and South Street in Greenfield? He tells that there is a lot of broken headstones strewn about. This is the Greenfield's Old Cemetery. Andrew p. Jackson donated the site to Hnacock Conuty May 3, 1843. But Benjamin Spellman's fourteen year old daughter Docia who died in 1828 is buried there. This plot became full in 1860. In 1868 the Commissioners deeded the property to the City. Not long after most graves were moved to the new Park Cemetery. When the graves were removed the burial plots were not filled in well and you can notice the depressions. Todays only a

only a handful of graves and stones remain at the site including a grave of a veteran of the War of 1812." Webb goes on to tell us "I live along Brandywine Creek and am finding a lot of broken pottery and bottles in the creek, some quite old. Any idea who might have dumped these, an old drugstore maybe? " Mr. Webb lives on Waterview Blvd does anyone have an answer? Perhaps there was an old dump in the area?

Gib Young tells us he performs Theodore Roosevelt 1915 and would like to come to your organization. You contact him at www.tive1915.com.

Bob and Becky Hall write that they drive 400E to avoid the congestion on I 70 in the mornings and they have noticed a concrete trestle on the east side between 500N and 600N. They indicate they realize it was part of the train tracks that run through Maxwell and wonder if they can hike on it. I know that the old train depot is still in Maxwell but are these tracks part of the Old Busy Bee Interurban Line? Do you know? Most train track beds I do believe are individually owned and you must be careful not to trespass.

According to the Binford History the ordinal survey on the site of the town of Maxwell was made on August 20, 1881, when 19 lots were laid out by Massa Apple. The community was first called Junction but when a few houses were built the name was changed to Maxwell. This was done to honor the connection with the man connected to the construction of the railroad. Maxwell was never incorporated.

2010-09-11

by
Joe Skvarenina

John Rasor wants to know if anyone remembers the train wreck in Charlottesville? It happened in the early 1950's just east of town. Most of the train cars were full of grain. No one was injured but one farmer Mr. Cobb had to drive into Jack Wright's yard just to get out of the way.

Retired Pastor Hugh Severance provides us with a photo of Mt. Lebanon before all the current remodeling. Note the wall like structure in the lower left of the photo, do you think that it is the old race track on 300 south? Mt. Lebanon Methodist Protestant Church was organized in 1848 in Brandywine Township by Rev Thomas Shipp. A log structure preceded the current building and it stood near the center of the old cemetery. The church was a small building with a puncheon seats and was used to just prior to the civil war when it burned down in 1858. After that the services were held in the Pleasant Hill School until 1882. In 1882 a new brick building was built. In 1914 the church was remodeled with a basement and a Sunday school room. Later a kitchen and multi purpose room was built on the church.

The county election office provides us with some very interesting information. Did you know that Hancock County elections for office holders actually began in 1858. From 1828-1858 the office holders were appointed by a body of men called the "Hancock County Committee to Appoint." The first actual election year for Commissioners was 1858. The first year for the election of other office holders was 1859. The first woman elected to office was Hazel Thompson who served as recorder in 1926. The first woman elected as Hancock County Clerk was Pat Elmore who was elected in 1966. In addition Pat has served as a Precinct committee person for the Hancock County republican party for 44 years since 1966. Has anyone served longer? The Elmore Senior Center in Riley Park is named for Ms. Elmore.

Did you ever talk to Armin Apple? He knows a lot about Hancock County. He wonders if there was any effort to run a steam barge across the top of Buck Creek Township in a way to level it off for drainage? He also describes a buffalo waller in his area. It is about 200 yards long and 80 ft. across with a 10 ft depression in the middle. There are probably more of these around than any of us realize. Many of the early roads started off as Buffalo Traces. I know that the Napoleon Trace ran through Hancock County. I often wondered if Fortville Pike was some type of early Wagon Trail or Buffalo Trace because it is so crooked. Early traces or roads would have gone around any natural obstacle.

2010-08-28

By
Joe Skvarenina

Vennis Cambell writes,

"Mr Glidewell is correct. The original Fraternal Order of Police Lodge structure came from Ft Harrison. I was permit supervisor at the State Highway Greenfield District Office , and helped Chief Audrey Jacobs and Ed Boyer of Greenfield House Movers gain approval for permit to use State roads. If I remember correctly , the route was Post Rd, US 40 and SR 9." That settles it Camp Atterbury was not the original site.

Joanie Fitzwater City Planning Director wonders if any one has a photo of the old Grand Hotel which is the current location of the Riley Emporium. If you go upstairs now you can see the old hotel rooms. Also in one room on the first level a picture is painted on the wall. This was probably the restaurant area. I believe the Grand Hotel was also Bradley Hall furniture. One item that was in the June William's Kaleidoscope indicated that in 1917," May Roberts, the Fat Girl, was robbed in Greenfield at the Grand Hotel. Upon awakening the show people reported that \$40,000 had been stolen when they slept." I guess the circus was in town.

Bill McKenna wanted to know if anyone had any information on the "Black Moon Manor" built in Buck Creek Township by John C. Eastes in 1862. Dwight Smith provides us with information about John C. Eastes. John was born in 1844 he was a merchant, farmer and leading citizen of Buck Creek Township. He was married to Sarah Harvey and the couple had six children none were named Rachel who you indicated was buried in the cemetery which you was behind the house. It sounds like the Black Moon Manor might possibly be a legend. Does anyone else know anything about Black Moor Manor?

John Hardin provides us with a copy of the 1956 Brandywine Echo. Do you know what it is? It is the yearbook for the Brandywine School. John Hardin was in the sixth grade at the time. There were eight grades. The building John attended was constructed in 1923. Currently there is a Township Park at the site. Does anyone know when it was torn down? In 1906 Brandywine Township had five room school houses with a single teacher teach. A Carrolton school had two instructors. Brandywine Township never had a high school. According to Ellie Trautmann who is an alum students had a choice of attending Greenfield or New Palestine High School.

Marlena Linne and the Franklin Township Historical Society provides us with this really cool photo from 1936 in Riley Park of the Annual AMA Gypsy Tour.

2010-08-21

by
Joe Skvarenina

Ronald White, " Have started reading your book "Then and Now" it really fills in a lot of blanks on the County. Great job, and great photo's.

I wonder if you have any information on the "Walls Villa Apts. at 2142 W. US 40 Greenfield. It has been abandoned for at least 3 years. But this place really intrigues me for several of the following reasons. The units stand alone or are in condo style with a shared wall and it has 3 units tucked back behind the other units. One of those units has doors for a tornado shelter or some kind of space beneath it. I wonder how many old motels have underground spaces big enough for people? This place really looks like it was a special place in its day, its day started somewhere around 1942. The original owner is listed as Sylvia Walls." I don't have any answers for Ron. Do any of you have any information Walls Villa Apartments? I know that for many years Us 40 was a main route of travel across the United States. With the advent of the modern interstate and I 70 many small towns, restaurants, tourist cabins, motels became obsolete. I wonder if Walls Villa Apartments became one of those architectural dinosaurs? If you get achange travel down 40, or the old Lincoln Highway up North or 52. The panorama of an Indiana long gone by is well worth the time.

Annie Tomey shares with us a 1959 Camaraderie. In those day the high school building was on North Street in the old Lincoln School now Apartments built in 1926. Some of you younger people might know this building as Lincoln Park Elementary School. It is particularly interesting to look at old year books but especially so for the ads. Do you remember Shivley's Market 415 Douglas Street, Greenfield Flower shop East National Road, McCullers Meat Market, Ordie's Shoes 20 West Main, Carr-Mac's Inc. 6 East Main Street, Broadway Lumber Co., Carr Mac's 6 East Main Street, Koob's Jewelry 28 West Main, Greenfield Ice Cream Co. 120 South Pennsylvania, Fisher's and many more. Where did they go. John Nay provides us with a photo of downtown Greenfield circa 1958 or 1959 or so. What do you remember?

2010-08-07

by
Joe Skvarenina

Marlena Linne writes, "Thanks for running my message about the Hoosier Land Lodge. I hope I find out who Mr Snider was or still is. But there was one little mistake in the article. It mentioned Harmons, which should really be Hammon's. It's the trucking company on the north side of 40 just east of 350 West. It's across from the Sugar Creek Fire Department. I don't know if this error is a big deal or not, but it may have throw off the investigation. I love your column. I think it's very important that we keep our past alive in any way we can."

Gayle called and says "Schneider" is the how he spelled his last name and his real name was Marion. Does anyone else know more about the Hoosier Motor Lodge?

Darrell Thomas writes to us about the log cabin on his property in the McCordsville area. The Thomas Log Cabin , 20ft. by 18ft. was built some time between 1830-1850 of poplar and chestnut logs which were in great supply in the McCordsville area at the time. There was no indication that it had been moved. The cabin set on large fieldstone rocks at each corner. Sometime after the turn of the century a brick foundation had been placed under each outside wall. My great grandfather John S. Thomas arrived on the 120 acres farm in 1869 from Nickolas County Kentucky, the Blue Springs area, with his wife Sarah and five children. My grandfather, John W. Thomas, was born in the cabin in 1874 and lived his entire 89 years of life on this farm dying in 1964. My dad always told me that the front of the house was a log cabin but this time it was covered with brick siding. Once the brick siding on the cabin was removed , I found horizontal wood covering logs. The sw corner of the cabin was beginning to deteriorate from the water damage and the weather. The top two or three corner logs were in poor shape as were the logs under the window sills. Most of the other logs were in excellent condition. Sometime in the late 1800's the cabin was divided into four homes. A stair way was accessed from the added on living room. My Aunt Okla Thomas Whiteside and my two Uncles Emmons and Cecil were born in the downstairs bedroom. The viewing for my Grandmother Izia Thomas at the time of her death was held in the other downstairs room in February, 1931. The Thomas family restored 99% of the cabin 2001. Thomas's daughter Erin was married on the back steps of the cabin. The original farm was called "Maplecrest" and the original name is inscribed on a sign on the front door. Darrell thanks for sharing this information. Do any of you have log cabin stories?

2010-07-31

by
Joe Skvarenina

Charlie Glidwell writes " I was going through your book at Walgreens yesterday while waiting for my wife, the item regarding the FOP Lodge caught my attention. The building used to be and Army day room and was purchased on a bid of \$101.00 by the members of the FOP. The building was located at Fort Benjamin Harrison not Camp Atterbury and was moved to its current location by Greenfield House Movers of Greenfield. The current location used to be and open dump and was cleared off at the same time as work was started on the Police firing range by the National School of Construction who volunteered their time and equipment to train equipment operators. One acre of ground was leased by the FOP from the City of Greenfield for \$1.00 and year for 100 years. The work on the building was done through volunteer labor by members of the FOP." Some say the building was from Camp Atterbury and others Fort Benjamin Harrison. What do the rest of you think? Thanks Charlie

Annie Tomey shares with us a clipping about S.A.D.McCord born in Greenfield but but living in McCordsville. Mr. McCord was a piano tuner circa 1900 and wore an unique emblem of his trade, a watch charm which was a perfectly shaped piano carved from solid brass and plated with gold. It was carved out by McCord himself. S.A.D couldn't find an emblem in any jewelry store which represented his trade so he made it. The idea was done with much skill. It required much patience to carve a perfectly shaped piano from brass. Mr. McCord was very proud of the representation of his trade. In the 1900 many proper homes always had a piano. So Hancock County needed their own local tuner. Reproduced column is one of S.A.D. McCord's promotional cards. Annie we will all miss your breakfast menu. Thanks for all those years of service.

Bill McKenna wants to know anyone has any information about "Black Moon Manor" According to some it was the first house built in Buck Creek Township. The house was built in 1862 by John C. Eastes. When an outbreak of small pox occurred this home became a small pox hospital. There is a cemetery behind the house where some of the sick were buried. Five year old Rachel Eastes was one of the first buried back of the house. In 1930 a resident of the house, according to legend, committed suicide by throwing herself down the well. What do you know about this place.

2010-07-24

By
Joe Skvarenina

Marlena Linne writes, "I just read the article about the Hoosier Land Lodge and would like to weigh in. In the early 50s my mother had a man named "Snip" Snider refinish and recane some chairs for our new dining room. My sister and I seem to remember (and you know how accurate that can be sometimes) Mr. Snider worked out of one of the little double unit motel buildings from the Lodge. But we can't agree as to whether he was on the west side of the creek where Harmon's is now or on the east side of the creek by the used car lot. But we do know it was along in there somewhere. We never did know Mr Snider's given name. We always knew him as "Snip". I'm kind of hoping that this article will not only clear up where the building was located but also the identity of Mr. Snider. I love this stuff."

Ryan Stuart on Meek Street is redoing his house and in his ceiling he found a treasure trove of things which included a 1922 calendar, receipt books, a report card for Dortha Smith 5th grade 1921 and Ohio Theater tickets plus other items. It seems that the owner of the property was one Emory Smith who might have been a cattle broker. Does anyone know about Mr. Smith?

The Jane Ross Reeves Octagon House Foundation in Shirley is looking for a set of original octagon house plans. A year ago a visitor said they did but no one remembers who has then?

Dianna Watkins in Fortville is interested in the works and writings of "Reefer Charlie Fox" King of the Hobos. She would be interested in buying one of his two books. Do you have either one? Dianna, I know when we publish the history of the Greenfield Daily Reporter his columns will be republished there. So be patient!

Congrats to Pastor Hugh on his recent retirement from Mt. Lebanon United Methodist Church. You are now history. I don't know how they meant this message in front of the cemetery?

2010-07-17

by
Joe Skvarenina

Dan Forst writes, "Last Thursday, we gained approval from the Hancock County BZA to operate a small antique furniture shop on our property. The primary building for our shop is going to be a renovated double motel unit that was brought to the property in the 1960's by my wife's Terry, grandfather. For many years it was used as a workshop.

We have done some research and discovered that this double unit was one of 4 or 5 that was a part of a motel business called "Hoosier Land Lodge." It was located just west of Philadelphia on U.S. 40 on the north side of the highway; in fact, there are still a couple of the units remaining there today.

We believed the motel ceased operations sometime in the late 50's or early 60's." Dan would like to obtain a picture of "Hoosier Land Lodge."

All motel units from the 40's, 50's, 60's and even the 70's would typically have post cards of their operations in their lobbies. Does anyone have a copy of it? Please let me know.

Retta Livengood is doing research on the history of the Greenfield Chamber. In 2011 it will be 60 years old. It was founded in 1951 and incorporated in 1957. I only remember the Chamber in the old City Hall and it's current location, the Lyman Building. Do any of you know any other locations or have other information which might be useful for the Chamber? I found a 1956 membership roster. In those days Cliff Fields was President and Bill Blue was Secretary Treasurer. On this document there were approximately 75 members. In 1956, Rody's Department Store, Sears, Thomas Drugs, Smitherman Hatcheries, Solotkin Furniture Store, Warehouse Market, Car Mac's, Christian Chevrolet, Fairs Lunch and Greenfield Gas were still in business. Did you shop at some of these locations?

Several years ago Mike Burrow wrote a history on the current or Lyman Building. It was built in 1875 with the original section serving as a residence and physician's office. In 1911 it was converted into the first funeral home in Hancock County. *In 1951 Frank Lyman's widow sold the facility and equipment to Russell Flanigan who changed the name to Flanigan Funeral Home. In 1958 it was sold to Max Hendrix and Russell Fields. It was called Hendrix and Fields Mortuary. In 1961 it became Hendrix Mortuary. In 1974 the building was purchased by Greenfield School Corporation for \$50,000. In 1996 it was purchased by the Chamber for \$50,000. It was renovated at a cost of \$350,000.*

2010-07-03

by
Joe Skvarenina

This is the year of the pig at the Indiana State Fair. Several people thought it might be interesting to find out about the big pig in Hancock County, Hoosier Jumbo.

Hoosier Jumbo was born on March 15, 1920. He was owned by Archie O. Brooks of Greenfield, His sire was Hoosier Giant Jr., and his dam was Miss Cherry Kingston. He was billed as the largest hog in the world. Evidently, he was sold to a Robert Thompson of La Fontaine who raised him to weigh 1,245 lbs. He was sold to the Indianapolis Abattoir Company at 60 cents per lb. (\$582.60). This was the highest price that a hog had ever sold for slaughtering

However, Hoosier Jumbo never entered the food chain. His carcass was preserved, and he was sent to go on display at the Indiana State Museum which was located in the basement of the Indiana State House. But where is Hoosier Jumbo now ? Does anyone know his location or anything about his owner? It is a real mystery. Help find him,

On July 31, the Hancock County Historical Society will have a Milk Can Dinner. The location is Tuttle's and it will be held from 4-7pm. Free will offering and the funds will be used by the Hancock County Historical Society. What is a milk can dinner? It is a lot of good things to eat like sausage, cabbage, corn on the cob, potatoes, carrots in a milk can and cooked over an open fire. Meal includes drinks and apple crisp.

Congrats to the Brandywine Chapter of the Junior Historical Society an affiliate of the Junior Historical Society and the Hancock County Historical Society. There are 57 members at Brandywine Elementary and the faculty advisor is Cindy Willyard. They recently won the state History Bowl and were named chapter of the year.

2010-06-26

by Joe Skvarenina

I was going down the old Brookville Treaty Road (commonly called State Rte 52)the other day to the home of Marcia Parker. Marcia and family live in the Schildmeier homestead which at one time had toll gate in the front of it. In 1852 the State allowed turnpike companies to improve roads usually with gravel. As a result of these improvement users would have to pay a toll to travel the road. Close to Marcia's House is the Schildmeier cemetery. It seems that Zion German Lutheran Congregation worshipped across 700 West from the Cemetery in a log church until about 1851. In 1845. Christian and his wife Maria Schildmeier conveyed to the " church of Zion in consideration of two dollars and fifty cents one-fourth acre upon the express conditions: that said land be used for a burying ground and there be a dwelling built on said land, and further that the members of the church of Zion shall fence said ground with a good fence and keep said fence in good repair and should the m,meeting house adjoining the above described be discontinued the said Christian Schildmeier and his heirs or assigns have the burying ground back for the sum of two dollars and fifty cents."

It is also interesting to note that Anton Schildmeier in 1888 served on the building committee for the German Evangelical Church in New Palestine. Anton Schildmeier is the name on Marcia's barn. I do believe it this current church building now stands in New Palestine as the United Church. In 1840 Anton Schildmeier and his wife Sophia built a large barn. In 1974 it was remodeled and used as a home by Max and Mildred Hendryx.

Marcia thanks fro sharing your home.

2010-06-19

by
Joe Skvarenina

Bonnie Lyons writes," My mother was Abe Coffin & Mary Etta Binford Coffin's niece. Uncle Abe's daughters had the log (Coffin) cabin restored as a Bicentennial project in 1976. The Connor Prairie people did the restoration of the 1823(?) cabin using native stone and timber, and it was really beautiful when first done. I have a clipping (somewhere) of a nice article in the Sunday Reporter showing Hilda Coffin Florea and Sylvia Coffin Scott or Lena Coffin Wilson in rocking chairs in front of the stone fireplace. When we took visiting Coffin cousins down there last summer, the big, white house was in a sad state of disrepair and the cabin was nearly completely overgrown with vines. It would be lovely to know that current owners have fixed it up. A family member told us several years ago that the property had been purchased by Uncle Abe's great grandchildren.

I knew that the Coffin family were farmers but did not know that they made shingles! Something to add to my family history, thank you! Several of the next generation were school teachers, including my grandfather, John Aldred Coffin and his cousins Hilda and Martha Coffin."

I know there is a log cabin in Cumberland at the Shambles, one on the 4-H Fairgrounds property and at least one in center city Greenfield and a log smoke house on Marcia Parker's home place. Do any of you know of any other log buildings throughout Hancock county. I do believe that it would be interesting to attempt to locate them all.

Boys and girls in Indiana history classes always ask me questions about building a log cabin. I have searched several publications for a description. Logan Esarey's "The Indiana Home tells it best. A pioneer would cut about twenty logs about one foot in diameter and maybe twenty feet long. They would also cut about twenty more about fifteen feet long for the ends. Three or four logs shorter than the others would be cut for the cables. Each log was notched on the end. If they were carefully notched and straight logs they could form a solid wall. Smaller logs were laid on the top logs to form rafters. At one end the logs were cut for a door and at the other for a fireplace. The chimney was formed from framework of small sticks filled with clay. The fireplace was built with stone and slowly heated so it was glazed and fireproof. Before winter the space between the logs was filled with wood pieces and clay. This was called chinking. The floor of a cabin would be clay covered with sand.

2010-06-01

by
Joe Skvarenina

Bridgette Jones a hostess at the Riley Old Home writes,
"I read your column today about the lady inquiring about the location of Griggsby Station. Since I was at the Riley Home today - I did some investigating. Here is what I found out:

The poem, *Griggsby Station* was originally published by James Whitcomb Riley in the newspaper, *The Indianapolis Journal*, on 05/17/1885. The original title of the poem was, *Back Where They Used to Be*.

It appeared in *Judge* magazine on 09/05/1885 - this time with the title of *Back to Griggsby's*.

It finally appeared in book form - along with a collection of other Riley poems in 1887 in Riley's edition called, *Afterwhiles*. This was the first time that the poem was entitled, *Griggsby's Station*.

The poem details the story of how the storyteller's father received a patent (probably on some invention), and the family suddenly becomes rich. They are now living in a big fancy house in the city, but the storyteller yearns for the simpler life of "Griggsby Station" when the family was "Back where we used to be so happy and so poor!"

The storyteller goes on to relate the different people that he misses - and names each one and tells something about each person. This is the only place where we can get a clue as to the location of Griggsby Station.

In the poem, Riley mentions the "Wiggenses" - "I want to see the Wiggenses, the whole kit-and-bilin',"

Riley wrote another poem, *What Christmas Fetched the Wigginses*. This poem was written on 12/13/1891. It was originally a joint enterprise between Riley and his friend, Young E. Allison of Louisville, KY. It finally appeared as the "carrier's address" of the *Louisville Times* on January 1, 1892. The only biographical notation that I have been able to locate on EITHER poem - is for the Christmas poem. In it - Edmund Eitel, Riley's nephew, made a notation that the "Scene is laid among the poor whites of the mountains of the central south."

Since the original poem, *Griggsby Station*, also refers to poor families and mentions the Wiggins family- we are assuming that this is the connection between the two.

2010-05-23

by

Joe Skvarenina

Walter Worland shares with us a 1972 Hancock Journal Democrat. It was probably his last issue as editor and publisher for it was sold to the Fleming brothers and Tom Ketchum. The date was August 10, 1972. It is interesting to look at old newspapers and thereby getting a time capsule of the history of the day. Traveling thru this particular edition we learn Ruth Lewman and her daughters were going to attend a Poultry Conference at Ohio State University and the Gem tractor pull was set for Monday according to Larry Sparks. Also in this edition, Fortville Town Board considers a mobile park plan at Rolling Acres Estate along with Stan Deutch's column on insurance. Vivian Pierson Ramsey gives us a snapshot Northgate Shopping Center in her column "Such is Life". She notes the grocery store, the variety store, the drug store, the theater, the hurry up and get it sandwich shop and the fried chicken place. She goes on to tell about, "the paved world and busy people there on the north east corner of State Street part of which was once the old Custer farm." Do you know if that is correct? What do you know about the Custer farm?

I did enjoy my visit with teacher Cathleen Huffman and the 5th graders at Eastern Hancock. The young people really know a lot about Hancock County history. To you scholars, before the arrival of the first white settlers perhaps several hundred Indians were located in Blue River Township. The home of the largest village was about a mile south of Westland Friends Church on the Abe Coffin Farm where there is currently an old log cabin which I hear the current owners have fixed up. The Coffin family arrived in Blue River Township around 1830. They were farmers and also made shingles. I hope this clarifies what we were talking about.

2010-05-22

by
Joe Skvarenina

Ena McClane writes,

" Every one has told me to contact you. My Red Hat group wants to be in the parade for Riley Days and we need to know what James Whitcomb Riley is talking about in the poem Grigsby Station? Is this his old home? or a Railroad station? We would really like to know what he is talking about. Please let me know. I was told if anyone would know it would be

you." I do believe that it is not Mr.. Riley's old home. His boyhood home is in Greenfield and his adult home was at Lockerbie Street in indianapolis were he rented a room from the Holstein family. What was the Grigsby Station about? Does anyone know?

in last weeks column we mentioned that Frier Atherton, from the Philadelphia Atherton's, on July 25, 1900 organized Company M, Second Regiment , Indiana National Guard with Captain Walter Bragg, Clifford Gery and Albert Barnes. This photo was taken July 2, 1901 at Santa Rosa in the Philippines after a 40 day hike over mountains and through rivers. Mr Atherton ,on the left ,and Mr.. Matten according to Atherton " slept without a bed and endured on a diet of hard tack and bacon. the only things we had with us are the things seen in the photo." Atherton contracted malaria and later committed suicide. He is buried in the Philadelphia cemetery. The Atherton's platted early Philadelphia.

Maple Grove or Olvey cemetery is located at the site of the first church in Green Township organized in 1830 as a Baptist Congregation. In 1870 a Friends congregation was organized at the site and called Maple Grove. This building was destroyed by fire in 1900.A second building on the site was destroyed by a storm in 1928.Is this the Gypsy graveyard?

Thanks to Sue Baker for the book on Tombstones which provides interesting histories on graveyards,

2010-05-19

By
Joe Skvarenina

Dave Meith writes, "Purely by luck, I discovered a street in Fortville with my last name. As I am rather ignorant of genealogy research, could you inform me as to where I might go to find some information " Do any of you know about this street.

Bonnie Lyons in Anderson writes about John Walters of Connersville who is known as the Graveyard Groomer. He has a small company that restores pioneer graveyards. His web site is www.graveyardgroomer.com. He claims that granite stones are weather proof. But the problem is that they weren't used much until after 1900.

Did you go to the dedication of the Veterans Memorial. Take time to go and look. It is great. Hancock County has always been patriotic and ready to call arms. For example after the Civil War several companies of militia were organized. The first known as Branham Rifles was organized on Jan. 23, 1874. It had 48 members. The Branham Rifles took part in several state encampments. They made a favorable impression on all those who saw them. In Oct. 1889 another Company was organized by Capt E.P. Thayer, Jr. It was known as the "Greenfield Light Infantry" or the "Third Separate Company in the Legion of Indiana." On Feb. 3, 1891 it was assigned to the Second Regiment, Indiana National Guard as Company F. On July 25, 1900 Company M, Second Regiment, Indiana national Guard was organized by Capt. Walter o. Bragg, Clifford Gery, Albert Barnes, and Frie Atherton also served as Company Captains. The Unit lasted until 1907. Company members participated in Decoration Day in Greenfield. At the outbreak of the Spanish American War Mr. Thayer was commissioned as a Lieutenant-Colonel but never saw action.

When the war was declared Spain in 1898 patriotism in Hancock was intense. The Solomon D. Kempton Post, Grand Army of the Republic at Fortville immediately offered their services to President McKinley. The Spanish American War lasted approximately four months from April to August 1898. Indiana furnished 7,421 volunteers for the war. There were no battle casualties but 73 died of disease.

2010-05-10

by
Joe Skvarenina

Gary Brogmann writes, "Marcia, while reading Joe's "Local History" column, I was intrigued by your family history and the fact that some of your relatives came from the town of Minden, Germany. The Borgmann family also originated from Minden in the late 1800's. They settled in Indianapolis for a few years before moving to the New Palestine area to establish farming. I have made two trips to Minden with my family, with the last visit in 2008. We actually went to the last known address listed on the immigration papers and knocked on the door (in 2003). We met the nice family living there. They were very excited about meeting people from the USA that had family originating from their home. I've attached a few photos of Minden for your pleasure. I have more that I can share with you if interested. We haven't been too successful though at locating relatives there.

Also, I have a copy of a document that Prairie Farmer Magazine published in the 20's which lists all of the farmers of Hancock county. It also lists a variety of information that I think Mr. Skvarenina and you would be interested in, such as family members (children), farm owners vs. tenement farmers, who the local livestock breeders were, what make of vehicles the farmers drove, etc. "

Did you know that St. John Lutheran Church at Five Points was originally St. John Minden.

I am a member of the Hancock County Pioneer Cemetery Commission and one of the sites they have been working on is the Sugar Creek Cemetery. The picture with this article shows all the work which needs done. The big job is determining the location of the stones. Sue Baker in her book on tombstones inscription writes, "The Sugar Creek Methodist Church was organized in 1838...and built a log church thirty by thirty eight feet. The membership lived on both sides of Sugar Creek but about 1850 those on the west side what drew and attended church in a schoolhouse on their side of the Creek. During the Civil War , a number of members joined the Cedar Creek Church which was located about one mile directly south...membership dwindled to a very few...the membership began to increase in 1872...awarded a contract for a new frame building to John S. Orr for \$1500. Regular Sunday services were held as late as 1916." Today, there is no trace of a church building and the cemetery, situated on a bluff off of 200 North. It is maintained by Township funds.

Have any of you know about the gypsie graveyard in Green Township?

2010-05-06

by
Joe Skvarenina

Marcia Dost Robertson writes, "I've been doing genealogy on the Spier and Waltke families in Hancock County. They are my Great and Great Great Grandparents. You have a picture in Images of Hancock County book on page 35 at the bottom some ladies on a wood pile. I have this same picture from my mother's collection of old pictures... My grandmother I think is on the top row 2nd from right, but I have no idea who the other ladies are. My grandmother was Caroline Spier Kottowski and her parents were Henry & Mary Waltke Spier. They both came from Germany around the Minden area. Mary Waltke Spier's parents were William & Friederike Waltke. They were from Windheim, Germany. I have found their immigration papers. Henry Spier was from Warber, Germany. I know the Spier side of the family, but cannot find out where the Waltke's lived around New Palestine and where they are buried. William Waltke was a farmer, so the census says. They first attended Zion Lutheran Church and I think they switched to the Evangelical Reformed United Church of Christ in New Palestine. There was an addition in New Palestine named Waltke with 26 lots, but it is under Fred Waltke's name. If you can help let me know or how I can find out more information, please let me know." Do any of you have any information about the picture or family? You can email Marcia at mrobert@861comcast.net.

Have you ever been to the Historic Hoosier Gym in Knightstown? My friend Charlie White and I took a ride over there last Sunday. In 1985, Knightstown's old high school gymnasium became the site where the Hoosiers movie with Gene Hackman was shot. Sports Illustrated called it one of the greatest sports movies of all times. Take time to drive over and look at it. In 1920, the Knightstown Schools had no gym. Basketball games were held at Bell's Hall above Jolly's Drugstore and the basement of the Presbyterian church. In February, 1921 half dozen Knightstown business met and discussed the situation. After much debate a plan was developed for a new gym. It was completed December 1, 1922. The cost was \$14,000 which was contributed from 250 private citizens and businesses. In 1936 the school board used federal Works progress administration funds for major improvements. In 1966 after 44 years of serving the community the Panthers of Knightstown played their last official game at the gym. Inside the gym you are taken back to the mid 1950's to an era early days sat in shorts and the one legged set shot. The gym is virtually unchanged since the 50's. If you like basketball it is the place to go.

Greenfield more than likely had a similar situation. In the early days basketball was played about the Hinchman Wagon building currently the soup kitchen. At one time there was a gymnasium building on state street or the current location of the office. Talk e supply.

2010-04-25

by
Joe Skvarenina

Bill Hamm writes,"Some of your recent columns have mentioned tokens from various local businesses. Rather than being a novelty, the use of tokens was so common that that it has been forgotten. Bakeries used tokens as a sales incentive when bread was 6 for 25 cents. You went home with one loaf and 5 tokens for later loaves at a reduced rate. Milk tokens could be purchased ahead of time. You would just leave a token in your empty bottle and you would have the new one paid for with no change. Some were just given away as sales incentives to keep you coming back. The ones from pool halls were sometimes used as chips in poker games hidden from the police.

Token collectors research the age of tokens just like genealogists research their ancestors. Businesses are born and die too. Instead of using census records, token collectors use city directories and Dun & Bradstreet listings to date tokens.

Here is a list of merchants that token collectors have identified as being from Greenfield, Indiana. I'm sure there are others.

E. C. ADDISON, RICHARD HAGANS BROOKHILL DAIRY, GOLDEN AERIE #1115,
GREENFIELD ICE CREAM CO., GREENFIELD LAUNDRY, INC.,
THE GREENFIELD PACKING CO., H. & K (Haw & Kinder, HARDIN MILK CO., L-R POOL
ROOM, LACY & LOY, RYAN'S G-FIELD CIGAR STORE, STRAFFORD DRUGS (wooden
nickel), SUNNY SIDE DAIRY, LEE C. THAYER, W. H. G."
Bill thanks for the interesting stuff. Do you have any of these tokens at home? I remember "Duzz
for Dishes."

The Hancock County Historical Society is in need of a volunteer Secretary to take Board minutes and to some correspondence. If you are interested contact the Hancock County Historical Society.

There have been other train wrecks in Greenfield!

On January 30, 1963, 30 boxcars of an Indianapolis bound freight train were jerked off the track and stacked up in a block long pileup when the axle assembly broke at Greenfield. A railroad official said the damages would be about \$500,000. The broke axle occurred on the 25th car 4 of the 105 unit train.

The Feb. 27, 1968 issue of the Daily Reporter tells us: a westbound Penn-Central freight train was derailed within the city limits of Greenfield today at 9:01 just south of Riley Park. City Police said 31 cars were put off the track. Trains were being rerouted around Greenfield. The wreckage occurred after the train traveled over the Brandywine Bridge. There were no explosions. According to a later account there had been other derailments at this site over the last two years.

2010-04-22

by
Joe Skvarenina

John Davis, former Pastor of the Christian Church writes, "I read with great interest your column about the Nays jewelry store robbery. I happened to be there when they captured the third robber. I was about ten years old. (So this would have been in 1961 or 62) It was Sunday morning around 10 AM and I was walking home from attending Sunday School at Bradley Methodist Church. The police had a large area of the street roped off in front of Nays. A good size crowd had gathered to view the excitement. This was a great concern to the police because a shootout had occurred while apprehending the other two robbers. The police kept asking people to disburse but nobody listened. I, myself, stayed on the north side of main street. It seemed more festive than dangerous. After about 30 minutes suddenly Rex Ellis, a reserve deputy came bounding down the stairs motioning to the other police officers to come with him. They ran up the stairs and in about two minutes escorted the last robber down the stairs. I remember how dirty he looked. He could barely walk because he had been tear gassed. They walked him straight down main street to the old jail. That was a lot of excitement for Greenfield back then."

Lin Parsons writes "Nays Jewelry was in the New Building it was at 18 W. Main Street which is now a Tax Office. Roberts Jewelry was located in the New Building on the corner of the alley called Mount Street. I believe that Roberts opened his store in the 1960's. I believe that Koobs Jewelry later Millers was on East side of Mount Street. Nays original store was on the corner of South State Street and Whiskey Alley or the current location of City Hall. Across the Alley was Miller's Bar and Grill next to that was A Pool Room (the Lucky L) both buildings are gone and currently the Parking lot for City Hall. The location of Nays on State Street became the Dew Drop Inn Restaurant after Nays moved to Main Street. I don't remember the robbery. It might have been the later part of 1959."

One kind lady mystery writer tells us "according to the Greenfield Phone Directory of 1962 Nays's was located at 18 West Main the present site of Haines Prigg. To my knowledge Nays's was on the South State Street in the fall of 1946. I don't remember hearing of the robbery. I have been a resident of Greenfield since 1947.

John Nay provides us with a 1957 photo of a train wreck in Greenfield. It happen east of State Street near the old American Legion building. Traffic and sightseers were a big problem. The City didn't have enough police to handle the problem. As a result the Civil Defense Police Unit was formed. This unit grew and served Greenfield and Hancock County for several years. In the mid 1980's the unit became the Hancock County Sheriff's Reserves.

2010-04-17

by
Joe Skvarenina

John Nay shares with us this photo of Nay's Jewelry Store ,the family business, after a shoot out. Notice the store windows pitted with holes. Nay's was in the New Building, now a parking lot, at 18 West Main Street. Two robbers in an apartment upstairs attempted to get through the ceiling to the valuables below in the shop. A lady upstairs in another apartment heard the noise and called the police. Robbers Herman and Moore were caught in the store by the long arm of the law. Nay's was also located in the alley across from the cab company, current location of city hall or the old Hancock County Bank. The robbery happened in the 1960's and I am without a precise date. Do you know the date? Nay's closed in the 1980's.

Have you ever heard of the Hancock Journal Democrat? The last edition was August 10, 1972. It was sold by Walter Worland to Hancock Publications a corporate name of Publications owned by Roger, Douglas, Rodney Fleming along with Tom and Linda Ketchum. The firm also owned the Hancock Daily News and The Hancock Advertiser , a weekly. The Hancock Journal Democrat was published at the location of Annie's Restaurant.

Did you know that the bell in the First Presbyterian Church was the bell from the third Hancock County Court House. This Court House stood until 1896 when it was sold to make way for the new and current courthouse.

2010-04-04

by
Joe Skvarenina

I recently had a delightful conversation with Mike Kiemeyer at Spring Lake. He and wife Kim share with us some significant reprints and post cards of the town of Spring Lake. According to an article in the Philadelphia United Methodist Church newsletter written by Loraine, last name unknown," Spring Lake was once a gully...In 1884/1885 William Dye conceived the idea of putting a dam across the west end to make a lake...Dye's Grove was opened to schools, lodges, and other organizations for picnics. A passenger steamer which was able to carry about thirty persons was built on the lake in 1886. During a camp meeting held at the site in 1886, the Philadelphia Society of Friends was organized...During the late 1880's one of the great sham battles of the Civil War was held at the site...In the course of time it became Spring Lake Park...In 1901, after the Indianapolis and Greenfield Traction line was built, a summer theater was operated for two seasons. Often the actors and singers had the entire building to themselves and after the second season the theater was not reopened...In 1903 a baseball park was built and drew large crowds on Sundays. The Park had changed hands several times and E.E. Matthews owned it for several years...It was eventually bought by a group who platted the entire tract for residential purposes in 1912. The town of Spring Lake was born. It has a town Board elections and the works. Thanks Mike and Kim.

Did you know that the Old Swimmin Hole Press in Greenfield, a division of William Mitchell Printing which was established in 1859, is where thre verses of Jim Riley were first put into type?

2010-03-25

By
Joe Skvarenina

Once a month the Fortville United Methodist Church has a free will offering breakfast and I have had the opportunity to look at that wonderful old building. Larry Adkins, a church volunteer, always has a smile and makes sure that your plate is full of good food. So plan to try it out. Bob Fort shares with us a "Souvenir Program" from the March 23, 1902 dedication of the church. Methodists who moved into Fortville in the 1840's found a class worshipping in a log building called Staats Chapel one and one half miles north of town. The location of this old church is now the Fortville Cemetery. According to that booklet, in 1856 revival was held by Rev. L. W. Monson, in a barn belonging to Peter Staat. Several were converted. These with the membership of Staat's Chapel organized themselves into the Fortville Methodist Episcopal Church. There were thirty eight members in the class. The congregation worshiped successfully in Staat's barn, a log cabin, the loft of the Noel building and in John Hudson's grocery. In 1859 a new church was built. It was in this meeting hall many Civil War sessions were held. It was in this building the boys in Blue were enlisted and mustered in to service. The Home Guard held their meetings at the old building. It was also at this site that the veterans were welcome home. In 1889 the old two story church was torn down. On December 19, 1900 a meeting was held to discuss to discuss a new church. The contract was awarded to Marsh & Guinn of Anderson. Ground was broken March 18, 1901. The cornerstone was laid July 25. During that day all the stores in Fortville were closed. The Fortville band marched to the site. other participants included the Grand Army of the Republic, I.O.O.F. Red Men Lodge plus other groups. In 1902 the church had a membership of 257 individuals and 48 probationers.

Gene Spencer shares with us his map of Greenfield during the 1940's and 1950's. Do you remember on Main Street the Nickel Nook, Duncan Malt Shop, Guinther's Fineclothing, A&P Grocery, the Arcade or Murphy Brothers Service Station, or the Western Auto? How about Mrs. Strawl's Boarding House or Shively's Dairy on South Street. How about East Street, do you remember IGA Warehouse Market, Krogers, or Kiger Cleaners?

Jim Cherry provides us with photo of his grandfather Almond Wickard strolling downtown in Greenfield during the same time period. Do you recognize the location?

2010-03-19

By

Joe Skvarenina

>

Ty Hite writes" Loved the picture in your article, both the Umbenower and Fuqua's are my
> family. They are on my Mom's (Roma Sharrett-Hite-Smith) and her Dad's
> (Forrest O. Sharrett (the greatest Grandpa ever)) side of the family. Mary
> Umbenower was my great Aunt and Redi Fuqua was my great Grandmother. From
> what I know, my family was the original owners of the building located at
> State Road 9 and Eden Road (as marked on the picture).

>

> Also, from what I know from my Mom, the building in the picture of your
> article, burned down when she was as a small girl, maybe mid to late
> 1930's. The building that stands today looks just like the original
> building except it is brick instead of clapboard. That is the building I
> know and grew up around.

>

> My Dad worked as a worker and proprietor of the second building between
> 1948 and 19667. Jack Hite (my Dad) ran Hi-Par Market with his partner Rich
> Parker, and attempted to buy back the building from Fred Pope, who had
> bought the building from my great Aunt,Mary Umbemower, who lived in the
> house across from the store (on 9), which was later occupied by (uncle) Ed
> Bradley. This was a great general store, fresh cut meat, cheese, dry
> goods, hardware, and even some clothing. There were even gas pumps out
> front. This was Wal-Mart before Wal-Mart was a concept. Unfortunately,
> 19667 and on, was about the time the grocery store chains started to become
> popular. Yes, Marsh, AGI, and Kroger put businesses like my Dad's out for
> good. No hard feelings, I shop at Wal-Mart.

>

> As far as the question about the blacksmith shop behind the store, I would
> say it was part of the original structure, not what is there now. There is
> a small brick structure behind the current building, along the alley that
> goes by the former Warner Tire Service, but I don't believe that is the
> blacksmith shop. Grandpa Sharret always called that the slaughter house
> (for the fresh cut meats and sausage, I don't know)." This is great information.

>

> Ty goes on to write " Now, can you help me with something?

>

> I have been looking for many years for a picture of my Dad standing in
> front of this building with my Grandma, Lena Hite-Walker-Jackson, Roy
> Bundy, Patsy Stevenson, and Roberta McKee that was in the back
> advertisement section of he Hancock Central year books in the 1960's. I've
> looked at the Library, and there is a collection there donated in the
> memory of Jack Hite, but none have the picture I'm looking for."

Can anyone help Ty with this photo? Ty tahksn for the great information, Your dad wrote soemthing on Hancock County Indians, didn't he?

2010-03-03

By Joe Skvarenina

Nathan Bilger looks at the 1906 Sanborn maps and tells "the Abbott Foundry and Machine Shop is on the third

lot west of Noble Street, on the south side of Main. This would now be the lot immediately west of what is now Enterprise Rent-a-car, where a house is now.

Checking the other sheets to rule out any anomalies, the site where Pizza King is now was in 1906 a couple of houses, and the site at the SE corner of Main and Penn was the former (as of 1906) Masonic Hall.

Further review of other Sanborn maps shows the Abbott shop at the same location in 1886, 1892, 1895, 1900, 1906, 1914, and 1927. Sometime between 1927 and 1949, the map indicates that the shop was replaced with a duplex matching the footprint of the current structure on the site. A cross-check of the city directories would give a more precise time frame of the business of course.

The 1949 map also shows that there was a store of concrete block construction at the Pizza King site. At the corner of Penn and Main, the 1949 map shows a filling station, which is the same structure (with additions) that is now the auto parts store.

Please note too that the numbers seen on the building in the photo (125 and 127) do match up with the Abbott Foundry address on the 1906 map, despite the location now being in the 400 block. On the map, the Sanborn company depicts both 125/127 and 413 as the address number. 125/127 was the actual number assigned by the city, apparently using a sequential numbering system that numbered every building in order. 413 was an arbitrary number used by Sanborn based on blocks or distance. At some point in time, the city decided to switch to a system similar to that used by Sanborn, so the site is now 415 W.Main." Thank you Nathan.

The following writers all reminded me the Freeport isd on the Big Blue River not the Brandywine. They are right.

William Bratton lived in Freeport from 1960-1990. Bob Ross has a vague memory of the old mill. His father Ora Ross drove a box wagon to obtain gravel to spread on the Shelby County Road. For the task he was paid \$3.00 by the Hanover Trustee. James Smith, a lad in the 1930's accompanied his father to the Mill with several bags of corn which was milled into flour and cornmeal. He was always impressed by the powerful machine and the mill itself. Charlie Shelby remembers the water wheel that was part of the mill. He and his mother would visit Lee and Bess Blazer who had a cottage along the river. Bess Justus Fischer lived in Freeport 21 years. She remembers that the people who owned the mill were from Germany. Also that people

would come from Indianapolis and Greenfield to live in cottages along the river. His grandfather was a blacksmith in Freeport. Her father would catch a bus on Route 52 to go to work in Indianapolis. As a younger person in 1958 they used to swim at the Hog Back swimming hole. Also there is a reported Indian Mound at Freeport called the Hog Back. She also tells all that is left of the Old Mill is the foundation.

The Earl k. Smith house was at the Shelby's on the corner of North and State Street not at the old Shelby's at the current location of Carol's Cafe

2010-02-23

by
Joe Skvarenina

The old Appledale Market was located on the corner of US 40 and Meridian Road west of Greenfield. The name "Appledale" came about because of the 40 acres of peach and apple trees which existed when US 40 was a two lane road. Mrs. Jacob Straffa purchased the land in 1939 from the late J.B. Hamers who operated it as Hamers Orchard. Mrs. Straffa passes the orchard to Mrs. Anthony Annarino. Mrs. Annarino with her late husband operated the market for a number of years. The original structure was destroyed by fire in the 1940's. Mr. and Mrs. Paul Lumbardo also operated the market. Currently all that is left of Appledale's is the Watermelon tank which is still in the ground with flowers growing out of it.

Betty Taylor writes around 1948-52 I worked on the ground floor of the Riley Hotel in the Beauty Shop. Irene Crim owned it. She also worked in Sam Silverstein's Dry Goods store and Goodman's Department Store, Betty tells bought a suite for our Pastor in Mac's men's store. She is 81 years young.

A mystery e mailer tells us that Virgil Williams was a Hancock County Pearl Harbor Survivor and he will be 95 on March 6th. We honor your service Mr. Williams.

Jim Cherry stopped by the other day with some photos of the Abbott Foundry. The location was the current site of the USA Auto Parts store on the southeast corner of Pennsylvania and Main Streets or the present location of the Pizza King which I don't believe is correct. I have also heard Noble and School Streets. Jim Cherry's photos which really adds to our knowledge of local history. The Foundry was in existence circa 1900 to 1908 which was the Greenfield's Gas boom era. Thanks Jim.

I have to give a lot of people credit, the Kenneth Butler Soup Kitchen has really made good use of the old Hinchman Wagon Building.. It serves a viable community purpose and hasn't really caused any problems. Go in some time and get lunch and of course leave a donation. The food is really good. Alan Corley who is volunteer President of the Board shares with us two plastic coins, one from the Welfare Department and one coin for 5 cents for Thomas Drug Store. I have never seen anything like that before perhaps the Welfare coin was a type of Food Stamps? The Soup kitchen could use your financial support. Please consider helping them out? Maybe you they will tell you about the electric car in the basement.

2010-02-14

By
Joe Skvarenina

Walter Worland provides a photo of the Rafferty Grocery and Hardware in Greenfield. It was the first Masonic Lodge in town was upstairs. It was located on the corner of Pennsylvania and Main Streets, now USA Auto parts. The second lodge was located in the Old Seminary Building. The Seminary building which was right in front of the old Harvest Supermarket property. Pennsylvania would have run through the middle of the Old Seminary building. The third location was the old Masonic building which is now the Arts Center. The fourth, is the new Lodge building on Tague Street.

Did you know that Kroger's was once in Andre's Florist. Does anyone know the years?

Did you know between 1850-53 there were Union, Worth, Harrison and Jones Townships in Hancock County. The last division of the Hancock was in 1853 with its numbers set with the current ones. Jones township was around Philadelphia. Union Township became part of Center and Buckcreek Townships. Harrison Township became part of Center Township. Worth Township became part of Jackson Township.

I had the opportunity to address the Pearl Harbor Survivors Association on Saturday and talk about writing history. Dick Trautmann came along for the ride and it was honor to address these men. Do we have any Pearl Harbor Survivors in Hancock County?

2010-01-31

by Joe Skvarenina

I had a Boy Scout and his father ask me if President Lincoln was ever in Hancock County. At times people allude to the story which still persists. One tale evolves around the Old Cleveland Inn. I found an article written by June Williams in September, 1994 which gives it further credence.

June Williams goes on to tell us. " I thought it ought to be recorded somewhere that Lincoln once 'slept here'. At least the claim was generally believed back in the earlier part of the century.

At one time there was a sign in front of the Cleveland Inn to commemorate this legend, placed there by the Hancock County Historical Society. I says, 'Jackson Township, Cleveland once called Portland, was a thriving pioneer community. In this Inn, the legend says Abraham Lincoln once stayed as a boy.' Currently Abraham Lincoln's name has been covered over by a small metal plate and it now says Andrew Jackson.

The Cleveland Inn, where Abraham Lincoln was said to have once stayed was built approximately in 1830 and still stands at 8400 E. U.S. 40. Around the turn of the century the Inn was owned by Roscoe Thomas who is credited with the legend. According to Thomas, Lincoln's stay was as a boy or maybe as a young man. Some say it was when Lincoln was traveling the National Road, US 40, as a Congressman. He had to stay somewhere on his journey. But no one knows for sure, no record remains.

At one point some individuals looking through the register for Abraham Lincoln did find one Andrew Jackson did stay at the Inn. But who knows for sure? Was it President Jackson or Lincoln? What do you think? The mystrey still remains!

I have told you everything that I know and some things that I don't. Talk to me.

2010-01-17

Joe Skvarenina

Walter Worland shares with us this photo of Main Street in Greenfield. You can see the old Arcade building now the location of the former Village Theater or the Weil and the site of various community performances. The Arcade housed many businesses including the Post Office until it moved to the current 1931 site. The Arcade Building had a long hallway and Hoosier Electric was on the west side of the building. The proprietor of Hoosier Electric was C.H. Brown. Later Greenfield gas boom businessman Walter Weil built a theatre on the site of the Arcade. In addition McCleereys' Sporting Goods was the State Theatre. They tell me that the projection box is still in the store. The Riley Theatre also probably the "Why Not" Theatre was at the location of the National Road Insurance. There is a painted line on the outside of the building which outlines how the original structure would have appeared.

The gas boom era brought many new industries to Greenfield. I would be interested in seeing some photos if anyone has any around the house. For instance, The Home Stove Company was supposedly one the buildings at the Center Street Shops location. The National Adjustable Chair Co. was on the bend on Tague Street. The Nail Works was the location of the Old Lincoln Inn or the empty lot where the car wash was located on west Main Street. Abbott Foundry was at Noble and School Streets.

Do any of you remember Daisy Diamond's Cozy Lunch Restaurant which later became Fishers. In the 1940 it was owned Roy and Daisy Diamond. It was a nice two story building with a cement porch across the front. It was right on the road and the parking was in the rear. You could go there for a nice meal seven days a week. On VJ Day when everyone heard the good news and many people came out to eat and the restaurant ran out of food. When Roy died Daisy moved to Cambridge City to open another eatery. The Fisher Family took it over at the time. Eventually it burned at the Moose sits at the site.

2010-01-02

By Joe Skvarenina

Sue Baker writes

"Your columns about Thomas Drugstore were of great interest to me, due to the fact that I was a 'soda jerk' there in 1946.

Most folks only have memory of the store on the corner of State and Main, but first it was located in a long narrow room in the building between the corner and Guthier's Men's Store, later Carr-Macs. The drugstore owner, Fred Thomas, remodeled the corner room and in 1946, moved the lunch counter and soda fountain into it leaving more room for the pharmacists in the original room. At which time Fred Thomas, Rhea Thomas, later Rihm, and a gal named Dickinson filled prescriptions from behind a beautifully ornate small section which had large, colorful bottles on the shelves. Fred's wife, also Rhea, and Inez Klinger worked on the drug side wrapping prescriptions, selling cosmetics, patent medicine, magazines, and such.

The drugstore lunch counter, served among others, ham salad, veal salad, roast pork and bar-be-que sandwiches. The price of plain ham salad or veal salad was ten cents, but toasted was fifteen cents. A milk shake was ten cents but a malt was fifteen cents. Many young folks worked there after school and on Saturday, including the owner's son, Jim, a few others were Jack Eaton, Evelyn Lane, Betty Holmes, Bob Moncrief and Bob Holmes. Ladies worked the lunch counter and soda fountain during the week, one of which was Susie Wills.

There were two other drugstores on Main Street at this time: Eikenberry's, later purchased by John Byrne, and Early's later purchased by Glenn Strafford. As strange as it may seem today, no stores of any kind were open on Sunday, therefore, the three drugstores took turns being open on Sunday.... Imagine that...." Thanks Sue for the memories.

Walter Hurlston Adams writes, "In 1930 when I was ten years old I learned to swim in a swimming hole known as 'two sycs' named after the two sycamore trees that grew southeast edge of the swimming hole. I swam in the swimming hole until the first swimming hole was built in Riley Park." After it was built the swimming hole of my youth was forgotten."In the years I swam, in Two Sycs, I met a lot of fathers who brought their sons to swim in Two Sycs. I remember one grandfather who brought his grandson to swim at Two Syc's that he had learned to swim at the location in the 1870's. To get to Two Syc's you would walk down Park Avenue and wade across the Brandywine. There wasn't a bridge back then but the Brandywine was only eight to ten inches deep and clean." Mr. Adams claimed that this was Riley's Old Swimmin Hole. What do you think?

2009-11-28

By Joe Skvarenina

Richard Rockey writes, back as far as 1890's Goodman's was before P N Hursch ,the Redman's picture a few weeks back had my dad in it he call some of square dances and George Norcross played the fiddle.

Larry Hunt tells that my Uncle Carl Bennett was the owner of the Columbia Baber Shop when it was located on Main Street. Prior to that location he had a small shop just North of the new Little Italy eating establishment. Later he built a new shop on West Main across from Bradley Methodist. Larry also tells that Thomas Drug Store was the main stay of downtown. On many a saturday morning shopping trip grandmother would settle us with a soda or sundae while she visited with Rhea Thomas in back of the Pharmacy.

Larry what years did Carl own the Columbia? Did he buy it from Edgar Ridlen? Do any of you remember Edgar and the Brady gang?

By the way the Thomas Drug Store was located at the Southeast corner of State and Main Street in what was called the Randall Building near to Car Mac's clothing. Do you remember Car Mac's.

I went to Wayne Sims auction and picked up a 1949 Riley Centennial Brochure. Do you know the location the James Whitcomb Riley Hotel, the Riley Theater, the Riley School or even the Riley Grocery Store? I do believe that these sites are long gone?

Mr. Sims had in his collection reminders from Nixon to go vote. In 1972 Nixon carried all 92 counties. He had 700,000 votes in Indiana. Nixon carried Hancock and Shelby by 4000 votes each. Doc Bowen defeated Matthew Welsh for Governor by 316,000 votes state wide. Prior to this time Hancock County had been solidly democrat,

The volunteers of Greenfield Main Street are working with Indiana Historic Landmarks in writing a grant to apply for a residential listing in Greenfield for the National Register for Historic Districts. This would be like the old North Side in Indianapolis. I know that some folks are against the National Register residential listing in Greenfield. But a National Register provides protection form federally funded projects,permits the use of investment tax credits for certified rehabilitation and allows home owners to apply for federal grants-in-aid. Please realize the National Register listing does not prevent home owners from altering their or even demolishing their property, restrict the use or sale of the property or establish times their property must be open to the public.

2009-11-07

By
Joe Skvarenina

John Jackson writes," I was a member of the small combo that played every Saturday night at the Red Men's Lodge in 1955-56. Ruby Chappell played piano, her husband, Tom played drums, and I played trombone. On certain nights there would be a round and square dance. Jon Gootch would play a fiddle for the square dances and for the round dances I would play the trombone. On other nights there would be a cake walk. Members would bake cakes and they would form a circle around the cake. The band would play as the members walked around the cake. When the music suddenly stopped, the dancer nearest the cake would win it.

Ruby tried to discourage Tom from indulging in alcoholic beverages. The bartender had a small funnel that would fit into the mouth of a six ounce coke bottle. Part of the soda went down the drain and the bottle would be refilled with Tom's favorite libation. I don't think he really fooled Ruby.

Jon Gootch was an expert at fixing bicycles. He had a shop east to the fire station on East North St. Tom Chappell was a volunteer fireman. Ruby worked at City Hall when Berry Hurley was Mayor. I'm retired from Eli Lilly."

John that is a great story and I appreciate you telling it.

Pat Elmore called and she wants to know if anyone remembers the location of Henry County Savings and Loan? Also was Rode's or Hursh's on the corner of Main Street and State Route 9 in Greenfield.

Walter Worland has a photo of the church which was at the location of the Old City Hall which is now the Veterans Memorial and he wants to know the name of the church. I do believe that it was Bradley Methodist Church. In 1840 Bradley worshiped in a little frame church on West South Street, a short distance from the Railroad. This building was occupied until 1866, when a brick church was erected on the southwest corner of South State and South Streets. This was the location of the old City Hall now the Veterans Memorial. The current Bradley Methodist was built in 1907 and shared a similar style with the Hancock County Court House. The style is a variation of Richardson Romanesque

2009-10-31

by
Joe Skvarenina

Sue writes, "Your "Search Light" story brought to my mind the Civil Air Patrol. I recall a large tower in or near Riley Park staffed by local members, and that Howard Grubbs was active in their activities. Would your readers have knowledge of this WWII group?" Does anyone remember the location of the tower?

The 1961 Greenfield Directory offers a glimpse of the community during that time period. Do you remember Greenfield Citizens Bank 8 West Main, Greenfield Building and Loan 101 North State, Koob's 28 West Main, The Man's World/Men's and Boy's clothing 1077 North State, Norman Clifton Agency 14 West Main, Greenfield Gas Company 112 West South Street or maybe the Greenfield Ice Cream Co, 120 South Pennsylvania? Clifford Fields was Mayor of Greenfield in those days.

David Sciacchitano called some time ago about a fascinating story. He is researching the Jeffrie/Heathcox family. It seems that they were Indians who moved from the East Coast to Ohio and eventually Indiana. They were from the Saponi Tribe who later allied themselves with the Catawba Indians. The family settled in Rush County and Whitley Counties around the 1830's. They moved to Hancock County after the Civil War. They lived at one time in the Charlottesville area. In 1880's the Jeffries brothers opened a Drayage (Trucking) and Livery business. The three brothers lasted until the 1920's.

They also settled in Jackson and Brandywine Townships in Hancock County. They were a quarter Indian. David's comments add to the rumor that persists that Indians lived in Brandywine Township? I do believe that Jeffries Livery stable was at the location of the old Ashley's Carpet on North State Street. This is now an empty parking lot across from the new Pizza Cafe.

Do you remember Shay's Spring Chicken Dinner? It was at the Columbia Hotel which is now the empty parking lot next to the soup kitchen.

Just a personal note. I was with a friend today who had a diabetic reaction and I had to call EMS in Greenfield. Those young people are really good at what they do. Thank you.

Hey, I need some photos, anything on the newspapers which were in Greenfield especially of the Spencer family and the Daily Reporter. Also do you have pictures of old buildings in the county? I would like to look at them, too.

2009-10-04

By Joe Skvarenina

I went over to the new American Legion the other day to pay my dues and I was presented with a box of WW I clippings to review.

Did you know that on May 6, 1917, a flagpole was erected on the courthouse lawn in Greenfield, During 1917 flagpoles were also raised at practically every town, public hall or church. On April 15, 1917 the people of Fortville had a celebration and raised a flagpole and 2,000 people attended. On April 26, 1917 a flagpole was raised in Charlottesville by Mrs. Vina Carroll, a soldiers widow.

Did you also know we once had a Hancock Council of Defense? It was appointed by Judge Earl Sample. Citizen Omar Jackson was Chairman, Albert New was the Vice Chairman, and F.Harrison Warner was Secretary. The purpose of the Council was to promote the patriotic spirit, aid the National Guard and Army in recruiting, aid in getting the boys below military age to work on the farms and to generally promote farming, aid in the successful promotion of the Liberty Loans, urge the production of staple nonperishable food crops, conduct campaign to reduce food waste , and to aid in the formation of Home Guard. The County Council of Defense opened a office in the rear of the auditor's office at the courthouse. Ruth Goble was a stenographer and ran the office. She also did the clerical work for the Food and Fuel Administration. The Council of Defense had all the local problems under wings. The Council also promoted the Liberty Guards The Council had a mass meeting in Greenfield February 2, 1918 to increase the enthusiasm for the war effort. The Council was dissolved February, 1919.

The above picture is of the Liberty or Home Guard. Three such organizations were started in Hancock County. James T, Larimore was the first commander. It's purpose was to protect transportation and industry from sabotage.

Did you have relatives who belonged to the Liberty Guard?

2009-09-26

by
Joe Skvarenina

James Whitcomb Riley was born October 7, 1849 and died July 22, 1916. As a poet Riley had two identities. He was a Victorian poet who wrote verses of love, art, bereavement and sorrow. He was also a writer of dialect verse. His first poem was published on September 7, 1870 in the Greenfield Commercial. It was entitled. "Same Old Story Told Again."

The best insight into his personality was an interview with Hamlin Garland in 1894 edition of McClure's magazine. It said," Although living so simply...confessed somewhat shamefacedly(yet with boyish pride) that his royalties were greater than any other American poet except Longfellow."

The years between 1876-1886 should be considered Riley's most productive. In 1879 he went to work for the Indianapolis Journal as its resident poet. His first book "The Old Swimmin Hole and Leven More Poems was published in 1883.

In 1921 the Greenfield ordered the Brandywine Creek surveyed with the idea of establishing a park in the area around the old swimming hole. In 1925 the Park was dedicated on the Poet's birthday. But today there is still some discussion on the Old Swimming Hole true location. Some say it was where it is designated in Riley Park while others say on the south side of the National Road is the true location. Still others say up by Roberts Lake. Riley never indicated the true location.

So do you know? Happy Riley Days!

2009-09-20

By Joe Skvarenina

Phil Slaughter writes , " You will probably be called on the carpet for this but I believe the Plantation Club was actually just west of McCordsville on ST Rd 67. We lived on the farm just north of McCordsville in the 50's and heard many stories about it being a naughty place and we shouldn't go near. Being brought up in the Nazarene Church with strict rules we obeyed our parents. Later on it was a respectable restaurant and later sold off for an amusement park for awhile." It was in McCordsville, Phil, you are right, I was in it when the Plantation Club was a restaurant but I don't remember it ever being part of the Park which was in the area. I do believe it was torn down when State Rte 67 was widened, Oh sweet progress! What do the rest of you know about the Plantation Club? I was in the secret cash room with the underground passage for the quick get away. Capone was at the Plantation Club.

Julie Ging from Chelsea Oklahoma writes "...wondered if it would be possible to see if anyone in Hancock County would know anything about the Greenfield Fruit Jar and Bottle Co. of Greenfield Indiana -1900-1906?"

According to the Richman History of Hancock County, " After the discovery gas in the spring of 1887 , several large concerns moved to Greenfield. Among them were four glass factories, two window houses and the Greenfield Fruit Jar and Bottle works in the west end of town and the bottle works at the east end of Greenfield. On November 20, 1909, Ball Brothers purchased the Greenfield Fruit Jar and Bottle Co. Greenfield's was the shepherd's crook lying on its side with the hook on the left. Greenfield made a wax sealer and a screw top mason. If you have any of these jars at home they are collectable.

The Greenfield Fruit Jar and Bottle works location was at the current location of Hardee's on the east side. I have been told when ever construction occurred at the site small and large pieces of glass would be found to this day.

In several other columns I have written about the school in East Greenfield or Oklahoma. In 1908 teacher Ada New asked for as a new school house. The school board turned the idea down but Ada was persistent and a plain frame building was built. It also served as a preaching station to many local pastors on Sunday afternoons. It was torn down in 1947.

2009-09-05

by

Joe Skvarenina

>

> Nathan Bilger from Indiana Railroads writes,

'>

>" Here's a quick history of the line through Greenfield (which was part of
> the Indianapolis-Richmond route).

>

>" The Indianapolis and Greenfield Rapid Transit company was incorporated

> in 1899, primarily by Greenfield investors, as you mentioned before.

> The route from Irvington (where it connected with the Indianapolis

> streetcar lines) to Greenfield opened in 1900. The Indianapolis and

> Eastern Traction Company (later the Indianapolis and Eastern Railway

> Company), made up of primarily Indianapolis investors, bought the I&GRT

> in 1902 and extended the line to Knightstown and eventually to Dublin

> where it connected with another line from Richmond. In 1907, the Terre

> Haute, Indianapolis and Eastern (THI&E) purchased the I&E. The THI&E

> was never a financially strong interurban, despite being one of the

> largest interurban companies in the state. The THI&E was sold at

> foreclosure in 1931 to a company that would become the Indiana Railroad

> (IRR), a company that would consolidate operations on nearly all of the

> surviving interurban railroads in downstate Indiana. The route from

> Irvington to Dunreith was abandoned in 1932, but never was operated as

> part of the Indiana Railroad system. The remaining Dunreith-Richmond

> route was used in conjunction with the Indianapolis-New Castle and New

> Castle-Dunreith lines to continue Indianapolis-Richmond service. This

> lasted until final abandonment in 1937.

>

> The line primarily paralleled the National Road for its length between

> Indianapolis and Richmond. The interurban was often located almost on

> the shoulder of the road, as well as in the center of the highway in

> towns. Most of the route is now underneath half of the 4-lane divided

> highway, as the state bought the interurban right of way in the 30's and

> expanded the highway. There are a few exceptions, for example in

> Knightstown and near Pennville, where the interurban route can still be

> discerned as it deviated from the highway in those places.

> As for structures along this route in Hancock County, there once was a

> powerplant located along the west side of Sugar Creek, south of the

> Pennsylvania Railroad near Philadelphia." Nathan goes on to add, "I am not sure how long
this

> plant lasted, but I do not believe it was used to the end in 1932. The

> first depot in Greenfield was located in a storefront adjacent to the

> Gooding Tavern on Main Street; this is now the west half of City Hall.

> The second, and longest lasting, depot was located just west of Pott's

> Ditch on the south side of Main Street. This depot was a concrete block
> building, and had a track that entered one side of the structure. This
> is now the location of the County Jail and Community Corrections. The
> American Legion in Knightstown was another depot, and a twin to the one
> in Greenfield, but is now covered in stucco. As you mentioned, the
> I&GRT and THI&E had a shop complex located on east Main Street where
> Riley Park Tire is now. As shown on the Sanborn maps, this complex
> included the brick building still standing, a few outbuildings, and an
> office building out front along Main Street that appears to have been
> previously a house. I do not have notes for depot locations for other
> towns in Hancock County, but each one would have had some sort of stop,
> even if it was located in the town's general store or was just a mere
> waiting shelter. Finally, the I&GRT had a short spur to a resort camp
> located south of the Pennsylvania Railroad on the east side of Sugar
> Creek. This resort was abandoned and redeveloped in the 1920's as the
> town of Spring Lake.
>
> In addition to the above described interurban route along the National
> Road, Hancock County also hosted other interurban lines.
>
> The Union Traction Company's route from Indianapolis to
> Anderson/Muncie/Fort Wayne paralleled the north side of the New York
> Central (now CSX) railroad through McCordsville and Fortville. The
> Alfont wreck, one of the worst in the state, occurred on this line just
> west of Ingalls. There is an historical marker dedicated to this
> disaster in the town park. This line was one of the last Indiana
> interurban lines to be abandoned; lasting until January 1941.
>
> Also, the UTC's Indianapolis-New Castle route paralleled the southside
> of the New York Central (now abandoned) railroad through Mt. Comfort,
> Maxwell, and Shirley. This was abandoned in 1937. This line has some
> concrete bridges still standing throughout the county.
>
> The Indianapolis and Cincinnati Traction Company (later the Indianapolis
> and Southeastern Railroad) had a route from Indianapolis to Connersville
> via Rushville. This route paralleled the north side of the B&O (now
> CSX) railroad through New Palestine and Fountaintown. This railroad
> company never was incorporated into the Indiana Railroad system, and the
> route was abandoned in 1932 as well."

2009-08-29

by
Joe Skvarenina

R.H. Rockey writes, " just thought I would send you a little more inf. on 1 room school house in east Greenfield I went there in 38-39-&40 the school was closed in-1947 .My teacher was Mrs. Meeks. Wanda should remember me but i am 5 years older than her ."

Did you go to the dedication of the American Legion Headquarters on Osage? The facility is something else. Great meeting space and you get to go there to eat six nights a week and the food is great. But I was somewhat surprise to see only one elected city or county official in attendance at the grand opening because this could be a real asset to the community. Kudos to City Councilman Mitch for being there. The Post was named after Dale Kuhn long time legionnaire who recently passed away.

The original organizational work for the American Legion was done by Captain Henry C. Gemmill. Elmer Bressel was elected the first commander in 1920. He was a local attorney. The first meeting was held at the Knight of Pythias Lodge Hall. The second meeting was held at the current Pizza Cafe on North State Street. Roy Pickett was the second commander. In 1922, the Memorial Building became the new Legion Home with the club room being above Pickett's Hardware. The Legion building on American Legion Place was built circa 1950-51 at the location of the Felt House. Glenroy construction was the contractor for this building. This structure was been expanded several times over the years.

Highlights of the Legion activities include the famous Drum and Bugle Corp. which was formed during the Depression years and went out of existence during WW II. During the 1960's and 70's the Legion hosted many big name bands which included Glenn Miller, Russ Miller and the Ink Spots.

The last WW I veteran and Legion member to die in Hancock was Harold Chambers who was in his 90's when he passed away.

On August 7, 1968 Mayor Barry Hurley and the City Council changed the name of South East Street to American Legion Place.

2009-08-22

by

Joe Skvarenina

John Patton writes " I am very interested in the history of Interurbans in Indiana and there is certainly a lack of information about them. Imagine, had they succeeded to modern times, the commuter transit system we would have today. I am amazed that so much right of way remains today." John would like to information on the right of way between Indy Greenfield and Richmond?

William Kriech is looking for descendants of Ephriam ROBBINS 1818-1880. He was a farmer. Are you a descendant?

Ada Headlee tells about Holdens Laundry on Penn. and South Streets?

Wanda Clemens wonders if anyone remembers the one room school house in East Greenfield. "My teacher, Miss Meeks taught three grades...There was a coal stoker for heat and I remember the Andis boys would get it going...We had outside johns...As years went by the school was changed into Huffman's Groccery. The store is now apartments." Does anyone know, is that buidling still in existance?

Wanda also tells , "There was a bell on the top of the building that someone would ring telling all the kids it was time to start to head out to class'." Wanda you have some great memories.

I spent a saturday recently with Dennis Westrich and the members of the Shirley Historical Society at Founders Day. The group supports two museums in Shirley. This year the Octagon House Foundation also participated in this particular festival. Have you ever been to any of the museums in Shirley. You must go and take a tour. The Octagon House was moved into Shirley from Brown Township.it was built in 1879 and their was about 2000 buit in the United States during the 19th century and only a handful remain today. In was moved in 1994 nine miles its current location.

Joan Peters Hughes provides us with pictures of the old Charlottesville burning in 1935. It happened on Christmas vacation. They were taken at the time by her Aunt Avis Peters Smith. Avis was teaching there at the time. Her father Lloyd was a bus driver. This school is before the old current school in Charlottesville

Did you know that Hancock County once had a woman sheriff? Dennis and Judy Fisk knew because she was grandma. Rosa M. Fisk was the widow of Ira Fisk, former sheriff., who died in 1945. Mrs. Fisk served as his deputy sheriff, When Ira died in 1945 she served as the Sheriff for the remaining two years of his term.

I am looking fopr some old photos of the newspaper business in Hancock County Do you have any?

2009-08-15

by Joe Skvarenina

Randy Brown called and he has print of James Whitcomb Riley signed by Charles Keepers Bruner and he would like to find a living descendant. You can call him at 517-7187.

By the way Charles Keepers Bruner born in 1857 and practice medicine in Hancock County until his death in 1917. He served on the Board of Pension Examiners for the Civil War Veterans and was a charter member of the Greenfield Library Board. His wife Mary Binford Bruner was the first women to practice medicine in Hancock County. Born in 1855, she graduated from Earlham College in 1877 and from the Women's Medical Hospital in Chicago in 1885. She began practicing medicine along with her husband in Greenfield in 1889. She served on the Board of Trustees of Earlham and was chairman of the State Board of Children Guardians. She was also a charter member of the Greenfield Friends Church. She died in November, 1942. Their son Ralph Prescott Bruner was sent by the Friends circa 1919 to serve as an ambulance driver with St. John Ambulance Corps in WW I as part of their support activities. The Bruner house was at the current location of Pizza King.

Some one wrote and wanted to know the location of Chicken Hill. The site is CR 400W and 400S in Sugar Creek Township. Folks for New Palestine used to journey to Chicken Hill in the 1920's and 1930's to buy their eggs from Mrs. Everson and thus the name. At one time there was a saw mill on the property down by the Sugar Creek.

2009-08-14

by
Joe Skvarenina

Here is a good one for you. I got an email from Cornwall England the other day." My name is Leslie Emmment quite an unusual name here with that spelling. I am 76 years old and live in Cornwall, England.

I have been researching my family history for many years but do not know of an American connection. Browsing the web with my name I was directed to Madison County Cemeteries-Melody Hull thull@iquest.net a very interesting site which refers to The Doty Cemetery, in Madison County - Green Township which starts by saying 'AKA EMMMENT' Melody tells me the Doty cemetery was also known as Emmment after 1876 but they have no graves or other knowledge of that name. She has kindly suggested I contact you as an adjoining county to see if you have any records I could search for the Emmment name. Could you direct me where to start please." I do know that cemeteries do change names as in the case of some Hancock County Cemeteries. If you could help our English friend information he can be reached at landj@meadowside35.freemove.co.uk.

Did you ever hear of the Barnard Family Orchestra of Eden. They furnished music for commencements, church entertainment and socials. The Barnard Family of musicians consisted of Mr. and Mrs. Elwood Barnard and their five children, Ethel, Olive, Helen, Anna and Robert. In 1899 the necessary instruments for an orchestra were selected and each child began taking music lessons. According to the Richman history the "children drove from the farm in Green Township to Fortville, a distance of six miles, then took the train to indianapolis to take their lessons at the metropolitan School of Music. During one summer under the management of the Redpath Chautauqua system of Chicago they played for one hundred and ten chautauqua's." In 1909 they disbanded after touring a greater part of the United States and Canada. Some of the younger members continued to play until 1915 when the Barnard Family Orchestra ceased to exist. Mr. Elwood Barnard was the Manager of the group and manger of a High Grade Sorghum Molasses Factory which was built in 1901. The Eden factory had the capacity to produce twelve hundred gallons per day. The output was twenty to thirty gallons per season. Barnard Sorghum was a household word in Hancock and surrounding communities. In those days it was the only manufacturing plant in Green Township. Mr. Barnard was also proprietor of the Eden Natural Gas Plant along with being a contractor for the drilling of gas and artesian wells.

2009-08-02

by Joe Skvarenina

Ok did you give up yet? Red Ribbon Antiques was A. A Gappens Sporting Goods at one time . As you can see from the photo they sold Harley Davidson motorcycles. Their method of display included a line up out front of the store. The year this photo was taken circa 1913.

I got a hold of copy of the Mt. Comfort Memory Bridge 1902-1963. It gives a interesting snap shot of the Mt. Comfort community probably around 1911 or so. "In town was thc church ands cemetery, three or four stores, Dillman's, Whitaker's, Wright's and Pogue's. There was jim Simcox harness shop called the Court House , a blacksmith Shop, a tile factory, and a modern grain elevator. The high school stood 3/4 mile east of here on the banks of Buck Creek... The canning Factory came to Mt. Comfort later."

The Memory Bridge goes on to tell..."The early history Schools in Buck Creek townships tells us in 1882 there were nine schools in Buck Creek Township with an enrollment of 492. The schools in Buck Creek Township were numbered 1 to 9 and number 5 came to be called Mt. Comfort School since it was very close to Old Mt. Comfort. Old Mt. Comfort was located on the present Sparks Road, the west leg of which is now closed...The first frame school was built about 1894. It burned in 1899 ... and was replaced by a new one with four rooms, two up and two down, located just west of Buck Creek... This four room building was condemned for school purposes in 1914 but the school was continued until the original portion of the recently demolished Mt. Comfort School was completed in 1917-1918 school year... "In 1971 the vestibule and stair room was all that was left of the four room school house. The current Mt. Comfort Elementary School which contained the two sections was recently demolished. There is nothing left of the Old Mt. Comfort School. By the way a three year certified high school began in Mt. Comfort in 1903. the first four year high school class graduated inn 1910. Eventually Mt. Comfort combined with Mt. Vernon.

2009-07-30

By
Joe Skvarenina

Nancy Leach provides us with some interesting information on cemeteries. There are 92 pioneer cemeteries in Hancock County. The word cemetery did not become a common word until the 1800's. It is a Greek word for "sleeping chamber". Those first using the word wanted to think of death as a sleep, or just some temporary state with the passing from death to terenal life. The word graveyard did not give them that hope. In the 1800's and early 1900's, cemeteries were used as parks. Families and friends would come after church to picnic and visit with both the living and the dead.

Vandalism of a cemetery is against the law. A person vandalizing a cemetery can go to jail . pay a fine and be responsible for costs of repairing the stones. Remember be respectful... the tombstones represents someone's life. The Commission is attempting to get signage for the pioneer resting places. They need about \$500. Donation can be made c/o of the Courthouse and the Hancock County Cemetery Commission.

Jerry Bell and his crew has a lot going at Nameless Creek. Nameless Creek Youth Camp. It was donated by Tuby Toms to the people of Hancock County. Tuby Toms wrote a column on outdoor life for 40 years for Indianapolis News. During his tenure he was named Indianapolis Newspaper man of the year and received a Sagamore of the Wabash by Governor Handley. Toms wrote, " I wish every and girl could have the experience of living on Six Mile Creek. I once caught a string of fish, cut a twig from a cottonwood then stuck it in the ground and there hung my string of fish. I roamed and a turtle ate my fish but the twig sprouted and today an 80 ft tree stands near Carthage."

Does any one know? There is a rumor that an Indian mound exists on the property? Also Jerry is looking of Nameless Creek campers over the years. They want to put them on their web site.

What do you know about Elizabeth Bidgood? She was born in 1883 or 1885. She taught art in Richmond retiring in 1944-45. Her family home was 303 Douglas Street. Some say she was the sweetheart of famous Hancock County Artist Richard Black. When Black died, Elizabeth wore his engagement ring until the day she died. Elizabeth painted dishes if you find one initialed with EB grab it up. It might be hers.

2009-07-15

According to their web site the United Remnant Band of Shawnee "After Tecumseh's death in 1818 about 40% of the warriors and their families decided to remain together as a Shawnee group. Thick water was Tecumseh's first cousin, best friend became the leader of the group. Thick water's name in Shawnee is Poughpoh which eventually became Pope. According to a 2000 edition of "Midwestern Folklore" Chief Hawk Pope comes from the Blue River Township in Hancock County. According to Pope the community was formed decades ago when a man one quarter Indian owned a General Store in Greenfield. He acquired some land in the township and sold to the Indian families for \$1.00 -per parcel. These people were too Indian to be allowed to homestead themselves. One group raised chicken, another cows but the community didn't seem to care. The Indians didn't bother anybody and they did favors for the farmers. Hawk Pope participated in a "500 Nations and Spirit Dance" which was a PBS Special.

The Shawnee Nation, United Remnant is recognized by the State of Ohio but not the Federal government. In 1971 it had 312 people on the rolls. In 1997 the Band had 600 members.

2009-07-08

Joe Skvarenina

Lin Parsons writes, "The one room school house was located on east fourth street between Berry and Cherry streets on the south side of the street. the 1st, 2nd, and 3rd grades were in it with a coal/wood stove for heat and a double out house for boys and one for girls. I went there for a short time in fall of 1946. Also he goes on to tell that, "the Way Out building was built by the Moose lodge, in the mid 60's it replaced an old church they were using as a lodge and club room. I was a trustee of the Moose when it was built. The old Church was between the present building and Cherry St." Lin Parsons is correct and the foundation of the old church is still there. It was made of large boulders or rocks and you can see in front of the Way Out building.

Phyllis Billerman tells, "I worked at the spoon factory owned by Jack Funcannon. Tom Bailey ran it. Calvin Shackel was maintenance. I worked with Mona Tanner, Janet Griffith, Pat Whittington. We melted and wrapped the spoons and forks and boxed and shipped them out. We also did chocolate and coffee creamer."

Donovan Lindsay says that as a child he can remember when the Mt. Lebanon Church, before their fellowship hall was built, would have all their pitch in's, bake sales and programs in the old **Brandywine School. This was in the 1950's after the Brandywine School was closed to scholars. In those days Brandywine served as a sort of community center in the area. One Mr. Pope was the caretaker and he was from the Indian community of Miami's or Shawnee's who settled around 500 East.**

Gloria Holloway from Red Ribbon Antiques provides us a photo of the construction of the Guymon /New building which is now the empty parking lot next to Victorian Rose. Look at the picture you can see Early Drug Store right next to the Red Ribbon. The Guymon House preceded the New building which burned down in my lifetime. The Guymon House exact location was at the Northwest corner of Mount and Main Streets. It was a Tavern which could be identified after the Civil War "at the sign of the eagle." In 1879, during the Temperance movement, "The Blue Ribbon Reading Association" opened a reading room in the Guymon House to offer "pleasant associations for the young men."

Now the Red Ribbon Antiques has been Shackle Shoe Repair 1904, Wilson Clock Repair 1908, Phelps Sanitary Bakery 1914, J. Smith jewelry 1926, Berlin Dieter Electric Shop 1955, Andis Shoe Repair 1958, B&K Flooring 1968, Wiggins Appliances 1969, Fashion Fabrics 1973, Kenson TV Sales 1977, Meyer Mill 1989 and now Red Ribbon Antiques.

But what was in Red Ribbon in 1913? What is your guess?

Leisa Hramon tells us that Helen & Cub Holzhausen owned the house at 412 N. State Street.

2009-06-30

Larry Hunt writes, In regards to Tom Graham's comments," the blacksmith shop at the corner of Pennsylvania and South streets (where the NAPA store now sits), was known as Bash's. I remember as a small child going with dad to take plow shears there to be re-pointed. Does anyone else remember this?

Peg Kingery tells the business which was located in the "Way Out "in East Greenfield was owned by Bob Funannon.They wrapped plastic eating utensils etc. No one seems to know what happen to the company. But in speaking of East Greenfield, did you know that the last one room school house was in that part of town. East Greenfield was once known as Oklahoma which included everything east of the Brandywine. In 1908 a local teacher , Mrs. Ada New, asked for a new school house. At first the school board turned her down but Mrs New was persistent and a plain frame building was soon erected. Many local Pastor's preached in the school on sunday afternoon. In 1947 it was abandoned as the last one room school. I do believe the location of the school was in front of the"Way Out" building.

Speaking of schools have you ever driven down Franklin Rd from Greenfield and at the corner of 400 seen the location of the old Brandywine School There is a shelter, Park, basketball goal and a sign at the Bandywine School site. Ellie Kleiman Trautmann tells me she graduated from Branywine in 1941.In 1906 Brandywine Townnship had five one-room grade schools each with one teacher. Carrolton had two instructors. Brandywine Township had no high school. In 1923 the township constructed the buidling on Franklin Rd. According to Ellie it had four rooms, eight grades and two grades per room. By the way Ellie and her husband Rich will celebrate their 60th Wedding Anniversary on sunday with an open house at their home,4253 50 W Rd. It is from 2till 6 you are invited to join in the celebration .There will be a tent. This is a nice couple and they should enjoy the community recogntion of there accomplishment. If I was married 60 years I would 121 years old.

It is interesting to note that prior to WWI Hancock County had 11 school corporations and 52 diiferent schools. Thirty three schools had one teacher each.

Have you driven down Rte 40 and seen the old Charlottesville School, fire and vandals have done a number on the property. The old football field seems to have all kinds of trees etc growing on it. The spirit of the children are gone.In late August of 1936 the cornertone was laid for this building. The old building was destroyed by a fire. This new facility would cost \$125,000 to build. Thomas Walker's History of Jackson Township Schools (does anyone have a copy of this?) was placed in the cornestone. Charlottesville resident and Butler Professor of psychology, Irwin Schultz, would be the dedication speaker.

Karen Harmon provides with a photo of her home at 412 N, State Street. She thinks it was built circa 1865. Does any one know about this old house. When you are doing research on your home it is good to look at the tax records in the courthouse as a starting place.This will give you an indication of when any improvment is made on the property.

Here's the question of the week. What was in Red Ribbon Antiques before Gloria opened that business at the site?

2009-06-20

By Joe Skvarenina

Daryl Thomas writes," I had heard talk of a business at Third and Cherry Streets that was operating in the late 1970's, at the current site of the Way Out Club. It was a vending company I assume, as I heard they bagged coffee, and hot chocolate, and that they manufactured plastic wares also. I was just curious as to the name of the business, as nobody I have spoken with can remember that part of the story. I am new to the area and am interested in learning more.

I was invited to the Children's Theater performance the other evening by Zane Roberts who played the Schizophrenic Kid in the The Wild, Wild, Wildest West. All the young people did a great job.The Children's Theater is a cooperative of the Hancock County Schools which also enjoys wide community support, The organization has been in operation since 1987.

Bob Montrose wants to know if anyone is aware that Interstate 70 is also known as the Anton "Tony" Hulman Highway?

Vennis Campbell tells that the Hospital property was Boyd's Grove.Chautauquas were held at the old fair grounds (Boyd's Grove) in 1913, 1914, and 1915. Speakers included Booker T. Washington, and Helen Keller. The Innes Band from New York city also performed. The Chautauqua were originally developed for the study of the Bible but were eventually to include other educational and recreational interests.William Jennings Bryan also spoke on the circuit. On December 21, 1885 Boyd's Grove was selected as the Hancock County Fairgrounds. In 1857 the fair was held on the south side of the railroad tracks, east of the Brandywine Creek on land belonging to Samuel Milroy. A fire destroyed the Floral Hall in 1871. This Hall was not rebuilt. The last fair at this location was held 1879. They say before the current hospital was developed you could find the foundations of the cattle barns on the back of the property.

2009-06-14

By Joe skvarenina

Have you ever met good old Ed Ramsey. He is a veteran and patriot and shares with us the picture of the Hoosier Pete Gas Station on the national Road at the location of the current Diary Queen. The photo is circa 1945 and his dad worked at the station.

Did I mention that Ed is 91 years young. He was with the 197 Infantry stationed on Adak Island in the Aleutians. Adak was 15 miles wide and 30 miles long. Ramsey served from Dec, 1941 to November 1945. According to a Life magazine article of the period..."after awhile no matter how hard they tried not to, the men learned to love the Aleutians."These island were a direct path to Alaska and it was necessary to hold them.In june, 1942 the Japanese seized Attu and Kiska. *n mid August they were driven off.*

Thanks for your service, Ed.

Judy and Pete Streth want to know what business sat on the SW corner of Morristown Pike and 40. Do you know?

2009-05-27

By Joe Skvarenina.

David Willis tells The History of Hancock County, Indiana by George J. Richman, B.L.
published

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> in 1916 and reprinted in 1978 gives this information for the church mentioned in last weeks
column.

The Western Grove Friends Church stands at the southwest corner of section

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> 12, township 15, range 7. In the year 1864 the Friends of this

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> neighborhood, then forming a part of the Westland preparative meeting ,made

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> a request through that meeting to the Spiceland quarterly meeting, to

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> establish a meeting for worship and a preparative at this place. The

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> Richman history goes on to list the charter members which included Isaac

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> Beeson and Mahlon Beeson. The house and lot, consisting of two acres, were

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> bought of Isaac Beeson for the sum of four hundred and fifty dollars. The

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> house, which was a hewed-log building, was used for several years previous

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> as a "potter's shop," and was known by that name for nearly nine years,

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> when a committee, composed of Jonathan Jessup, John Hunt, Lewis G Rule and

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> Elihu Coffin, were appointed to solicit money and material for a new church

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> building. The history goes on to list those who donated material and labor

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> toward the new building.

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> David goes on to tell that my father's sister, Mary Willis married Russel P. Beeson, the
grandson of

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> Mahlon Beeson.

> David now live on property in Blue

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> River Township which has been in the Willis family since 1879. Six

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> generations of the family have lived there.

Shirley Ebbert writes I was reading the Saturday paper and realized the church location was on land my father was raised on and later farmed. The church stood on the Northeast corner of CR 200S and 500 E. There are two brick homes standing on this lot today. One was built by my father and the other by my maternal grandfather.. The Church was called Locust Grove Friends Church. The church got its name from a two acre grove of locust trees in the area. Her dad Jack L. Brown remembers cutting the locust trees down for fence posts with his father Osborne L. Brown. Her family moved into the area in 1947 to one of the Beeson farms about 1/2 mile away from 200 S. My grandfather purchased the farm on which Locust Grove Friends Church stood. My family used the old church for grain storage up until the late 1980's. During the thirty years the land was in our family we never found a cemetery at the location. According to Ebbert there is a map located in the Knightstown records that show the church, the plot of trees and the nearby Beeson farm.

According to Gwen Betor there will be some excitement at the Riley Old Home on June 30th at 11 am at Elizabeth Ann kitchen when Christina Burke great great grand niece of Minnie **Bell Mitchell presents to the Riley Old Home Society a recently uncovered memior of her great great aunt. Minnie Belle Mitchell was a key figure** in getting Riley recognized throughout the state and nation. The older folks in chairs are John and Minnie Belle Mitchell. This photo was taken in 1937 or 1938 at 210 West North Street at the home of the Baldwin sisters. The Baldwin sisters long time were Greenfield librarian

Does anyone know the location of Boyd's Grove? Have I got you stumped?

2009-05-16

BY JOE SKVARENINA

One person writes, There were boat races in Greenfield at the location you mentioned in your column. The original location was first a midget car race track held on Saturday nights. When they faded out the same two men, my uncles Everett & Dewey Leary, did away with the race track & made a lake there & held motor boat races. That location is between Riley Park Tire & Brandywine Creek across from Riley Park. Everett Leary had a Studebaker dealership in front of the race track. That was in the mid 40's.

I saw Jane Wakeland at the auction the other day, she wants to know about a church and a cemetery started by the Beeson family.. It was on the corner of 200 S and 500 E. There was a graveyard at the site used from about the 1840's until the 1980's. Does anyone know about the church.

Have you ever met Trina Burk. She is something else. Some people might call what she did as the miracle on North Street.. But Trina firmly believes that God led her to restore the old brick church which is next to the Girl Scout House. The structure originally built in 1898 has served as the Bible Methodist church, Church of Christ and St. Michael's Catholic Church.

Burk purchased the structure in November 2001 for \$52,000 but she has also done \$100,000 in repairs to the structure.. According to Trina, "I wanted to open it as a chapel to help young congregations grow." Also, "My sister was getting married and she couldn't find a place appropriate for a wedding...a spiritual place without being a member of a denomination" The Bible Methodist Church had its last meeting at the site in July when Trina purchased the structure. When Trina bought it there was a drop ceiling and the support arms were damaged. There were extreme amount of water damaged to the plaster. All the stain glass windows were covered with ply wood.. After the removing the plywood she discovered the names of the individuals who donated the windows were on some of the window panels. Burk indicated that a lot of glass also had to be replaced.. The church was originally St. Michael's Roman Catholic Church built in 1898.

But St Michaels' Parish is much older. The exact date of the first Mass is not known. It was probably celebrated between 1835 and 1840. During the early years Mass was conducted in the homes of Catholic families when a Priest could come out from Indianapolis. This pattern would continue until the the 1860's. At that time a frame structure located in the 100 block of west North Street. was purchased from a group of individuals who previously used it as a school house. Later St. Michael's congregation outgrew this small building. It was sold and moved to West Pierson Street. I believe it is still being used as a residence.

In 1870 St Michael's was formally organized as a Parish and stayed on North Street until the mid 1950's. When the church was built in the 1898 it cost \$4,000. The original glass was produced in Kokomo. It was no longer available. Trina believes the inner doors were the original front doors. Trina invite everyone to visit her Garden Chapel.

2009-05-12

By
Joe Skvarenina

Larry Hunt writes, to the best of my recollection, Boyd School Road is actually County Road 300 North. The Boyd School House sat on the northwest corner of CR 300 North and State Road 9. I can't say for sure what stretch of the road was considered Boyd Road though. Probably about a mile each way at least. Also the Road , 450 West, that runs between CR 300 North and CR 400 North used to be called Punkin Street. Additionally, Meridian Road running north from Main Street used to be called Appledale Road. Appledale Market was located on the Northwest corner of Main and Meridian.

Vennis Campbell goes on to say, the olds school house stood at the North west corner of SR 9 and 300 North. The Boyd Family owned the land on all four quadrants of that intersection. It seems to me that we used to refer to that corner as Boyd School House. But a lot of years have gone since then. Memory sometimes becomes a little hazy.

Phil Samuels writes , my dad and I enjoy your Greenfield Reporter column very much. My dad ,who is 93,has lived in Greenfield all his life. He knows there was a Boyd School House but never heard a reference to Boyd School House Road. Phil also asks ,have you come across any info about Boat Races in Greenfield? Dad remembers the year I was born , 1944, motor boat races were held just Southwest of what is now Riley Park Tire. A man made pond was build of earth just north of the Railroad tracks and was pumped full of water from the Brandywine. Samuels goes on tell about the Greenfield Movie Theaters. The Weil Theater on the North side of West Main Street is the current Ricks Art Center. But according to Phil there were three others. In the 1950's I remember the Riley Theater on South East Street across from the Courthouse. This was located in the vicinity of the bread ladies or maybe a store front to the South. Phil. I think the Riley was the National Road Insurance? Where do the rest of you think the Riley was located? Does anyone have a photograph? Phil goes on to say I remember it had balcony seating and showed westerns to kids on saturday mornings. There was also the State Theater on South Street about where McCleary's Sporting Goods is currently located. Does anyone have a photo of the state? Phil's Dad says when he was a kid there was also a theater on West Main Street on the South side of the street. Do any of you remember?

Last Phil says that when Whitie Ware after he left Fairs Lunch opened his own ice cream and sandwich shop across from the Riley Park Tire. This was Greenfield's first Jim Dandy's. I wonder Jim Dandy's wet tenderloin was Fairs recipe.

Now more about Hancock's Lincoln Legend, the book John Hardin had was written in 1864 by Joseph Barrett and it was called the "Life of Lincoln". It says "The brothers of Thomas Lincoln had previously removed to a more northern location in Indiana than that which he had occupied. Both settled in Blue River country-Mordecai in Hancock County , where he not long after died and Josiah in Harrison county." Is there a Mordecai Lincoln buried in Blue River Township? Do you know anything about the Lincoln staying at the Cleveland Inn? Perhaps the

two legend anew connected?

Here is a question for you. What was the location of Boyd's Grove?

2009-05-03

By
Joe Skvarenina

Joe Godby wants to know about the Rock Garden in which he and his friends used to play. It was on the north side of Greenfield. Come to think of it my daughter Leigh and friend Kelly took me to see it at one time. On the north edge of Greenfield a local couple built a fantastic rock garden with waterfalls and exotic plant life for their enjoyment. L.E. Harker began the rock garden in the 1920's. He also raised peonies to the north of the home on North State Street in a field that covered most of the area between the house and McKenzie Road. The flowers covered much of Holiday Park. In 2001 the Harker Home became the site of the Head Shop and the Rock Garden was cleared for additional parking. Phil Hinchman provides the photos because I do believe that Harkers were family.

Yes, Joe, you also wanted to know about the gas boom. In 1886, the first natural gas company formed was called the Greenfield Gas Company. Eventually there was 43 individual gas companies were established. In 1885 an article in the Hancock Democrat estimates that one thousand men were employed in Gas related jobs. Greenfield and the surrounding Hancock communities offered fuel, free gas, and land as incentives to new business. The gas boom in Hancock was 1887-1915.

Speaking of Lincoln in the fall 1914 school children of Hancock created the Lincoln Fund and collected \$72.55 in pennies for the suffering children of Belgium. During the winter of 1914-1915 another movement was started to collect food stuffs including flour, meat and other supplies.

Did you know that in the 1958 election the Democrats won all offices in the county.

Gary Mitthoefer also remembers Hoosier Pete Road. Gary goes on to say that Mitthoefer Road in Cumberland was named after his family. The road itself was developed in the 1800's as a path down to the National Road. The original farm was on the northeast corner of Mitthoeffer and 38th Street. Gary was one of the last family members to work the farm.

Who knows anything about Boyd School House Road?

2009-04-19

by Joe Skvarenina

Amy Johnson Senior Archaeologist writes , "by far the majority of Indiana's over 56,000 currently recorded archaeological sites are located on private property. If you own land that contains sites, and are interested in preserving them...The Indiana Heritage Trust may be used to purchase land from willing sellers to preserve and protect outstanding cultural and natural resources. To learn more details, go to www.in.gov/dnr/."

Robert Cook tells. " You are exactly correct about Hoosier Pete Road. There was a large billboard on the Northwest corner and US Highway 40 and what is now 700 W. After the billboard was gone the area grew up in grass and was actually farmed for several years.

Marlena Linne was raised in Warren Township but her family had friends in Greenfield. During numerous trips along the National Road she remembered the billboard on 700W. It was the shape of an oil truck. The body of the truck was black or dark blue with yellow letters and read Hoosier Pete or maybe Hoosier Pete Oil. The truck on the sign was headed north. Marlena says there are Hoosier two Hoosier Pete's. on Washington Street in Indianapolis and several in Muncie.

Harold Jones says when his wife Betty wanted to start a flower garden beside the barn in digging he found an 1866 GAR (Grand Army of the Republic medal) dated 1866 right in the proposed bed. Harold was farming in Brown Township at the time. According to Jones this particular recognition was given to the officers and participants of the Civil War and was a forerunner of the Congressional Medal of Honor.

Paul Baker shares that on February 20, 1964 two blazes broke out in the condemned Riley Hotel next to Tom William's law office. The site is now an empty lot. Fireman blamed the fire on vagrants. US 40 traffic was rerouted until the firemen brought the blaze under control. Some people asked at the time why they bothered to stop the fire because they wanted the building removed anyway. The answer was once out of control the entire block could go.

Socialist Eugene V Debs ran for President of the United States five times. He died in 1926. In 1912 he polled the votes of one million citizens. Riley wrote a poem about him,"There's Gene Debs . There he stands a holding out in both his hands a fine heart that ever beat , Twixt here and the great judgment seat. Doesn't that make you wonder about Riley's politics?

Next Saturday there will be a car show at the Historical Society. Fun and food for everyone.

2009-04-05

by
Joe Skvarenina

Society today has a tendency to look at the good old days through rose-colored glasses. But an Indiana Historical Society publication tells us in the 1870's, "open gutters ran along the streets and carried filth, as the newspaper accounts often call the contents of the gutters , which might have included horse manure, waste from chamber pots, dead animals, and household garbage." It goes on to say, cutters consisted of shallow ditches at the sides of the street with wooden foot bridges that often needed repair...the gutters did not provide adequate drainage during rain storms..." Good old days?

Do you know about "Hoosier Pete " Road which was 700 W. There was a time when roads had to be indentified in this fashion so people wouldn't get lost. Hoosier Pete probably had a billboard at the site? Do you the location of Boyd's School House Road?

Did you know the the islands in the middle of East and Spring Streets up toward the hospital are left from the days when the hospital properly was the fairgrounds. This is the place that the attractions would place their marquees.

Have you heard of Shay's chicken dinner in the old Columbia Hotel? The hotel was one of the finest in the state across from the old interurban station.

Dave Pasco shares with us the article in April 1, 1944 Daily Reporter entitled "County Courthouse will be moved to the town of Maxell. The story goes on to tell, "The Hancock County Courthouse for 45 years Greenfield's most imposing edifice and the center of local is to be moved from this city...No contract has been awarded for moving the building , but advertisements for the proposal are to be made soon. Moving the structure is expected to cost in the neighborhood of a half-million dollars." This was meant to be an April's fool joke.

If you go to the southside of the courthouse , the southeast corner, you'll see a small stone in the sidewalk. This is the stone which pioneer surveyors used to begin to measure off lots in town The stone has a small cross marked on the top of it.

The picture is the old Longfellow School. It stood on the north side of Main Street where Bradbury's Station was located or 520 East Main Street. It was built in 1883 at a cost of \$5400 and was torn down around 1925. There are apartments behind Bradbury's which are also on the site. If you go down Pratt Street you can see some of the wall surrounding the old scholl still remaining.

2009-03-29

by

Joe Skvarenina

Stephanie Jones in the March 15 paper you had a picture of John Walker's house in Greenfield. We have a John Walker in our family that lived many places in Hancock County. He lived from 1892-1969 and is buried in McCray Cemetery. I was wondering if this house was his? Do any of you know if it was the same John Walker?

Ruth Arthur writes that combining the Cleveland and Charlottesville Methodists churches was not a harmonious experience, Conference decided that Charlottesville would be the surviving location. Many of the Cleveland folk didn't go the Charlottesville. My memory of the deposition of the Cleveland building was it was on the NW corner of 850E and US 40. The ground was sold to a neighbor who's name was Johnson who lived to the West of the church. Those folks tore the building down and maintained the grounds. Thanks Ruth.

Vennis Campbell tells us ,for the person who inquired ,David A. Service was born September 11 1866 in Hancock County and was the son David W. Service and Lucinda Banks. David and Lucinda are buried in the Mt. Lebanon Cemetery.

Jim Baker tells in June 1947 the American Legion Junior Baseball program arrived in Hancock County. Any and all boys age 17 and under were invited to a practice at Riley Park . This program was sponsored by American Legion Post #119 AND Mark Demaree Ford. The American Junior Baseball played its opening game June 13, 1947, with a parade from the Mark Demaree Agency located at 845 West Main Street to the Riley Park diamond. The opposing team was Kensington Post of Indianapolis. Do you remember Legion Baseball?

The March issue of Heritage Hoosier is all about Hancock County. Local historians my self and others contributed information about significant people and places in Hancock County. Copies can be obtained from Eagle Press in Grandview Indiana or by emailing stash@psci.net. The cost is \$4.00

Stella Catherine Penn Parks shares with us letters written by Mary Monroe Cage to her sister Nancy Monroe Benson from Tipton County to Shelby County. The letters go from 1877 to 1914. It is Mary's husband's political view were in line with the Republican party. Mr Cage died as a result of injuries he received in a train wreck on the Wabash going to his sister's funeral. You know people don't write letters like they used to do. A lot of family history is saved in old letters. Do you save yours?

Winston Hammons wants to know about old Greenfield cemeteries. Sue Backer writes the definitive book "Hancock County, Indiana Tombstone Inscriptions : One Hundred Years, 1833-1933." Baker tells Greenfield's Old Cemetery is located at South and Swope Streets near the junk yard. This was the city's first and the land was donated in 1843 by Andrew P. Jackson. But the first burial was the fourteen year old daughter of Benjamin Spellman, Docia, who died in 1828. The grounds became full in 1860. Around 1868 many graves were moved to the Park Cemetery. Park had been purchased in April 1863 by the City of Greenfield. The original tract

was six acres and covered with timber and it cost \$450. In 1865 the City adopted a plan for its development.

Who says American's can't make cars! Don Lindsay tells that the same 1949 Dodge brought home three generations from the hospital. All three are in the picture.. Witherspoon Adickes bought a 1948 Dodge after the war and took it to Atlanta to pick up grandson Joe. Later daughter Meredith was picked up in the same car in Little Rock Arkansas by her father. Now Baby Vyvyan Linville is picked up by her mother in Greenfield. You see Joe Sam , daughter Meredith Sam and VyVyan in front of the auto. Remember when baby's were born at home with midwives.

2009-03-21

by
Joe Skvarenina

Ronnie Brees provides us with his family reunion photo taken August 26, 1920. This type of group photography was very popular at one time. This was the Brooks-Miller Reunion at Riverside Park in Indianapolis. The Park was on the near westside of Indianapolis near the Naval Armory. At one time Riverside was also amusement park . It was a popular destination for Greenfield folk. Ronnie's foster grandparents Glenn and Mary Fuller who are pictured owned the house at the current site of McDonald's. Fletcher Brooks also in the photo owned a house in the s curve on 600 North. Do you recognized anyone in the photo?

When my parents both passed on I became the proud owner of all the family photos on both sides the clan. I had no idea who all these people were in the photos. I eventually pitched some of them. Have you in some fashion identifies you family photos? I do believe that future generations will appreciate it.

Ron Sanders, owner of the Cumberland Shambles, is also President of the Indiana National Road Association. Did you notice the cabin at his business site, it is for real. It was built in 1830's along the old National Road and the Henry Ward Beecher according to some would visit a friend at the cabin. Henry Ward Beecher was an anti-slavery activist and Preacher of the Second Presbyterian church which was on Monument Circle at the the time. Preacher Beecher founded the Marion County Agricultural Society.

Have you ever seen the John T. Hatfield Holiness Campground in Cleveland on the national Road. It is still there and actively used. Hatfield was also known as the Hoosier Evangelist because he traveled around the country preaching at campground and various Holiness meetings. His topic was about leading the sanctified life. In his book "Forty Years a Live Wire" he writes he began to experience deeply troubling religious visions of himself stepping into hell. He began attending Camp Meetings. At one such meeting at the Acton Methodist Campground he became sanctified and Jesus came through a horn entering his heart. At the conclusion of this particular camp meeting he became an Evangelist. I do believe there is an annual revival at the campground. Charlottesville Methodist was the Hatfield home church.

2009-03-12

By
Joe Skvarenina

I was asked the other day to be on the Hancock County Cemetery Commission. The mission of the group is to locate, record, restore, and maintain all Pioneer Cemeteries of Hancock County. There are currently 93 known cemeteries in the Hancock County. This group gets no public funds but operates on donations. The Commission is responsible for cemeteries established before 1850. I firmly believe that pioneer are one of the most historic landmarks in the community. they are important to preserve and may be the burial ground for pioneer leaders, Veterans of and American war. If you would like to help you can contact me or other members of the commission

Did you know that there once was Methodist Church in Cleveland? In 1840 a small group of Methodists organized in Jackson Township and worshipped in homes until 1850. At that time a small church was erected a quarter mile north of Cleveland. In 1870 the Church was moved down to Cleveland on the National Road. In 1914 it was remodeled and had membership of 150 souls. In 1942 when the church was widened it was removed to back to another lot?

In the early part of the century Cleveland, Charlottesville, Willow Branch and Maple Valley were part of the same charge. The first settlers in Charlottesville held their services one mile north of town in a school house on Six Mile Creek. Later a small church was built at the Six Mile Cemetery 2 miles north for a cost of \$70 in 1838. In 1855 a new church was dedicated in town. In 1890 it was remodeled with T.D Tharp being the Pastor. On June 25, 1902 a storm swept through Charlottesville destroying the Christian Church and doing much damage to the Methodist Church. Pastor James Ruley and the trustees made plans for the erection of a new church. Parts of the existing building were used. The current church was dedicated January 31, 1904. It is interesting to note that John T. Hatfield, the Hoosier Evangelist was a class leader at the Church. he was the one who built the holiness campground in Cleveland. Eventually both churches combined and shared a parsonage. The belfry on the Charlottesville church has been removed in the photo which is circa 1912.

In 1965 the Cleveland and Charlottesville Churches were united. The church at Charlottesville being the largest was chosen as the successor. The Alter, Baptistry, Pulpit and Benches of the Cleveland Church were taken to Charlottesville. These pieces of furniture were built by Arthur Hewson of Cleveland. Rev Gilleland was the Pastor of the combined church. Thanks to John Rasor for all this information on these churches.

Is there still a building in Cleveland? If not how and when was it destroyed?

2009-03-07

By Joe Skvarenina

Carol Cochard Pool writes, "my father CC Cochard has found several arrowheads and artifacts around our family farm in the Mohawk area. The collection has many arrowheads, a large and heavy grinding stone and one brother believes a tomahawk." She goes on to comment the Hancock Plat Book will say Cochard burial site. "There are no Cochards buried here . For years I was told that the Cyprus Trees beside was Indiana burial grounds....A few years ago my brother, Brian, who lives there now, had to dig beside the house. No one knew about any remains. A skull was retrieved from the ground. Not only did progress stop for my brothers project but many agencies like the Indiana Historical Society and the police came to visit. Anthropologist believed that the skull was 150 years old and European descent. My father, 94 years young, believes it was a burial site for the poor during a plague." Does anyone no anything more about this site? Was there a cemetery on the Cochard burial site? By the way Carol I don't think you can open a casino.

Did you know that our current Post office was dedicated November 12 1931? Prior to this the Post Office has been at different sites in Greenfield. It was the responsibility of the Post Master to find the site and they were appointed on the basis of their politics. The Greenfield Post office has been on West Main Street. At another time it was south side of West Main Street about the location of Frazier's Lunch Room(the pop corn shop).The Post Office was also located in the Arcade building on the north side of the current Ricks Theater. Just prior to moving to the current site it was in Greenfield Banking Company.

By the way the 1931 building is located on Walkers Hill. Yes it was on a hill since State Street was been built up at a later date. In the 1930's it was a heavily wooded area and to the rear was an old homestead in the current Central Park. It was the home of John Walker and was torn down when the new Post Office was built. The house stood on a small hill and overlooked a stream called Potts Ditch. Eventually the stream was arched over for a long way and much of land was reclaimed. Rumor has it Riley entertained in the Parlor of the home. He played the violin. The photo courtesy of Tom Williams shows the Walker home in Central Park.

By the way the Board of the Riley Old Home Society was recently reorganized. If you want to voluteer this is the place to go. Thanks to Mayor Brad for his help in the reorganization.

2009-03-01

By
Joe Skvarenina

Daniel Jones writes, "I do remember the National Drive In. My family spent many summer nights there. When it was torn down in the late 1980's my wife and I salvaged the movie screen and other materials to build a barn on the property we had just purchased. The screen was made of corrugated siding 45 feet long." He goes on to tell it was a real task to move, but fit their budget. He put the white side that the movies were projected on on the inside of the barn with the blue, now brown side out. Daniel goes on to say, "Every now and then I stop and look at the barn and think about the old drive in and how many people spent hours staring at that barn siding."

The history of the Mt. Lebanon Church is just about completed. I took the proofs this morning to Pastor Hugh Severance to take a look. It is turning out to be a short history of the Brandywine Township. One person in the book is Plutarch Sistorious Montrose (Plute) named for a Greek Historian. He was born August 22, 1872 and came to Indiana as a well driller during the "gas boom" era. He married Claudia Estella Tyner on Dec. 6, 1894. The Tyner's were early Hancock County settlers arriving in the community in 1834. Both he and his wife were members of Mt. Lebanon Methodist Protestant Church. Plutarch died in 1937 and his wife not until 1966. They had six children. Other Mt. Lebanon families include Low and Deshong. If you are interested in the book contact Pastor Hugh at the church.

Edward Hutton sends us two copies of "Huttons of Southern Indiana 1765-1996." There are some Hutton descendants in Hancock County. According to Hutton, "the pioneer was greatly influenced by religion on the frontier...Methodists were very successful in isolated communities by their use of circuit riders....Many Protestant preachers were not closely committed to any sect...They also performed marriage, but often this was confirmation after the fact....Unofficially young couples had informal broomstick marriages which consisted of jumping over a broomstick together. When the traveling minister arrived, his marriage service made the marriage official." Hutton also tells the camp meeting was another development in frontier religion. The camp meeting attracted many attendees and the backwoods preacher would stir the audiences into emotional frenzy. Singing and shouting characterized the meetings. Many people fainted and rolled on the ground. Even after a town developed churches the camp meeting would continue as part of these churches. Boyd's Grove in Greenfield was the site many a camp meeting. (Boyd's Grove is the hospital property).

The photos are of the Red Crown service station on Main Street. The photo date from the late 1920's. All traces of the old Longfellow school behind the station are gone. Longfellow school was at the site from the 1880's till around the 1920's. For many years the station was known as Brad's. Brad was Jim Bradbury's father. The station building is still in existence but doesn't look the same. An apartment complex is now behind on the Logellow site.

2009-02-23

By
Joe Skvarenina

Some say there was an old Indian Trail that followed Fortville Pike. In fact according the Black Institute at Indiana University there was an Indian trading site in the area around Maxwell that dated from 3000 BC until 1000 AD. Artifacts found on the farm from the trading post area now form part of the Hancock Historical Society collection and can be viewed at the Chapel in the Park Museum. Ancient people left proof of existence at this site long before the birth of Christ right here in Hancock County. Also in Blue River Township there was a prehistoric Indian Village where Nameless Creek joins the Blue River. Arrowheads and other ceremonial rocks have been found at the site. Some say Nameless Creek youth camp has an Indian mound on the property. Do you know of any other Indian sites in the County?

February invites us to celebrate Lincoln's birthday. There are some who believe that he visited Hancock County. Legend has it he stayed in the Cleveland Inn along the National Road (Rte. 40). This Inn was built around 1830 and it is still there. Roscoe Thomas who owned the Inn around the turn of the century believed that Lincoln's stay at the Inn was the Gospel truth. Did Lincoln stay there when he was a congressman when traveling across the country? Did Lincoln once sleep here? By the way the community of Cleveland was once called Portland.

The photo is of the original Drum and Bugle Corps of Hancock Post #119 of the American Legion. It was organized in 1931 and disbanded in 1943 during WW II. The photo was taken in front of the Memorial Building. Also did you know that in the 1920's the Legion had a baseball team. According to an edition of the Legionaire, "They played to crowds of 1,000 persons with other teams throughout Hancock County." Some say they were best throughout the 1940's.

Bonnie Jefferts from Kettle Falls Washington writes to see if anyone know anything about William A. Service. born in Brandywine Township September 30, 1866. In 1898 he was Clerk of Court in Greenfield.

The Indiana State Library had a great genealogy collection including cemetery transcriptions and church histories. If you are doing research it is the place to go!

2009-01-31

By Joseph Skvarenina

It has been settled, Link Fairs was at the Mian Street Signs location. Rody's clothing store was at the location of Snap, Krackle, and Pop. According to Brian Mason the old Fairs Kitchen extends underneath both buildibngs and the dishes etc. are still there.

Scott Miller tells us he has a map of Indiana and Ohio dated 1864. It seems on the map that New Palestine is listed as Sugar Creek. Did New Pal have that name? Or was it just a railway stop designation? Do you know?

Tom Haines wants to know if there were ever any cannons in front of the Memorial Buidling? Built onthe corner of North and East Sreets, the Memorial Buidling was dedicated on September 30, 1923. It was designated as a WW I Memorial. Initiatly the American Legion and Auxiliary had the use of the second floor. The cornerstone of the buidling was laid by Taylor Morford a Civil War veteran and a member of the GAR. GAR stands for the Grand Army of the Republic. Post#119 of the American Legion was organized on New Year Day 1921. On April 21, 1921 the Grand Army of the Republic entertained members of Hancock County Post #119 sealing A friendship until the last veteran of the Civil War past away. On Ocober 16, 1942 the cannons were moved from in front of the Memorial buidling and sold for scrap for WW II. The two cannons were a large Austrian howitzer and a smaller German fieldpiece. They were brought from New York City by Post #119. You can still see the location of the two guns outside the Memorial Buidling. Go look and see if you can find the spots. By the way can you find the Morford Builing?

2009-01-25

Scott Starkey wants to know if anyone has knowledge of the location of Jerome Spark's dental office. He practiced in Greenfield from 1890's until around 1910. Hey do you realize the library has many old year books and various directories if Grandpa did ads that might make a good place to start. Does anyone know anything about Sparks?

Bob Glazier has collected Greenfield milk bottles and want some more information on the Greenfield Ice Cream Company and Shively's Dairy. Greenfield Ice Cream also on Pennsylvania at the location of the Pizza Shop. Shively's was at Newcomers. Yes they were in close location to each other and by the railroad for easy shipping, Greenfield was still operating in 1958. What do the rest of you know?

Chris Desong wants to know the resolution of 1965 Klan arrest. Chris, the five men were arrested under at the time Indiana's hate crime statute. All were released from Hancock County Jail on \$2,000 cash bond each.

I went out to Otterbein United Methodist Church the other day for their soup supper and had a great time. The Macedonia United Brethren was first organized in 1860 in a school house. The school was eventually purchased and used as a worship site until 1870's. Interesting enough there is no historical records of the names of the actual charter members. In 1882 five trustees for the Buck Creek Townahip United Brethren Church were elected at the Warrington Circuit. Those elected included John Parker, Calvin Crump, George W. Parker, John H. Apple and Wills Parker.. In 1882 a building was built at a cost of \$832.58 and the building was paid for by the day of decication. At this point the church became Otterbein. Current church records go back to 1900. A new church was built on the site in 1911. In 1968 United Brethren merged with the Methodists. The current church historian is Carolyn Swinford and she keeps a good history. By the way, all churches need functioning historians. If you church has a local history I would enjoy seeing a copy!

Candy Hudziak emailed me to see if I had any photos on the Hinchman Building which is currently Tom Williams Law office. Wagons were built at the site and the second floor was used as a gyn for early athletic contests. The basketball floor is still there.

2009-01-13

by Joe Skvarenina

Do you know about Millie's Miniatures. Millie and her husband Perry lived in this house on North Street. Frances Eagleston wrote a small volume about her in 1992. Mildred Davis creator of "Millie Miniatures" for 30 years crafted miniature dolls which depicted the characters in the poems of James Whitcomb Riley. She was a doll maker who was known nationally and shipped her small characters all over the country. According to Eagleston, " ...Davis had daily visitors or bus loads on pleasant weekends who wanted to see the dolls she made. After she was immobilized by (an) accident in 1940, she began making string dolls to amuse neighborhood children. After her strength returned she made more elaborate dolls with skill acquired by years of dressmaking. ..Before long she was making storybook character dolls , Mother Goose and some Riley characters make their way into her stock and proved popular." Eventually Millie gave many lectures, recited Riley Poems, and conducted exhibits at various museums, schools and other locations. She also lectured to raise funds for the Red Cross. Millie's miniatures were displayed at the Chicago Art Institute and the Carnegie Library in Pittsburgh.

Millie told many people that her admiration for Riley began when she was ten years old and her family moved to Greenfield. She would tell that as a child she hid in the bushes at the Riley home on Sunday outside the birth place to hear the poet, back for a visit, tell scary stories about grave robbers and goblins.

Millie died in 1973 and is buried in Park Cemetery.

2009-01-12

Over the years people have been asked me to write about the KKK in Hancock County which I have resisted. I saw nothing worthwhile in exposing the seamier side of our history. But I have finally come to the realization that the best way not to repeat the past is to tell it like it happened. I have one fellow historian tell me that "just everybody" belonged to the Klan in those days. The KKK arose in the United States and maybe as a result of WW I, in the words of Warren Harding a return to "normalcy." The country was tired of President Wilson's internationalism and entangling alliances and the immigration of all those foreigners to our shores. They wanted protective tariffs like Smoot Hawley and a nativism that hadn't been a round since the administration of Millard Fillmore and the "No Nothing Party." You see the Klan was against foreigners, Catholics and African Americans. William Lutholtz's 1991 book, "D.C. Stephenson and the Klux Klux Klan in Indiana" indicates for 1922-1925 Klan membership in Indiana exceeded 250,000 males. In Hancock County according to the Daily Reporter the largest Klan rally occurred May 22, 1923 when an estimated 20,000 Klan members marched to the Hancock County Fairgrounds in an evening parade. But in 1925 statewide scandals reduced the Klan's power. C.D. Stephenson, Indiana Grand Dragon, was in 1925 convicted for second degree murder for attacking and raping 28 year old state office worker. Klan controlled governor Ed Jackson was also jailed at the time.

It is interesting to note that in 1965 Prosecutor Jerry Lewis arrested 5 out of town Klan members for distributing anti jewish anti catholic and anti black material on the streets of Greenfield. Robert M. Shelton, Imperial Wizard of the Klan traveled to Greenfield to inquire about the five men. Shelton was quoted as saying, "law abiding white Christians had been arrested when communists operating in the United States were allowed to distribute materials without problems." Shelton goes on to say, " (Lewis) would not arrested Martin Luther King if he came to Greenfield to conduct a civil rights demonstration on behalf of negroes."

I do believe the lesson was learned.

The stone barn on 300 N was built in 1911 by Robert Frost according to Cheryl Kingery. Doug in Knightstown needs to call me back with the information on Greenfield African American community.

2008-12-30

By
Joe Skvarenina

Jeannie Shively remembers Fairs lunch being in the first block on the right from State Street. Fairs shared an entrance with Rody's. According to her father Fair's had the best brain sandwich in town. Shively also tells that whiskey alley was behind Fairs. She goes on to tell that Jesse Shively came in Greenfield in 1929 from North Manchester. In 1930 he started Shively's Dairy. The Dairy business ran from 1929 to 1953. The location was 111 West South Street across the alley from Newcomers Lumber. The family home was in front and the dairy was in back. It was standing until about 1968.

John Jackson also remembers Fairs lunch. The lady cooks were in the basement and sent the food up on dumbwaiters. They had the best rhubarb and gooseberry pie. Travelers coming into Greenfield would see the Fairs sign just to be told when they entered it was for women only. John goes on to tell that the first job he had that required a social security number was with the Warehouse (grocery) across from the Christian Church on North East Street. His employment began in 1949. He went to work at 7 am and stayed until 9pm. He got a half hour for lunch which he took at Fairs. He got many a wet breaded tenderloin on a bun with brown gravy. Chili was 25 cents a bowl and if you were short of cash a bowl of bean soup with ample corn bread was 15 cents.

Bob Schrieber tells us about the roller skating rink at Riley Park in the 1950's. According to Woodrow Grist who was manager and owner a closely matched contest was held wednesday evening. The first part consisted of couples dancing the two step on skates with top honors to Betty Arnold and Bud Adams. A waltz was next on the program with awards being given to Mr. and Mrs. Max Schrieber.

Do any of you remember the rink? It was at the current location of the pool and it was in a tent.

2008-12-23

by Joe Skvarenina

Margaret Scott writes in reference to the early auto dealers in Greenfield , "My Dad Orville Nigh, had the dealership for Hudson Terraplane called Nigh & Allen Motor Sale. Later Mr. Allen became Mayor of Greenfield." The dealership was located across from the Old Library on North Street according to Ms.Scott. Wasn't Holt Motors also at the site?

Lynn Stanley writes about the big white house east of the old Charlottesville High School. Lynn tells, "My folks bought the property in 1948 and I have a picture taken at the time." She invites Sherry Stevens to give her a call.

Lois Mae Pearson writes, " my late husband Billy Dick Pearson took up very brick in that (Charlottesville) school on a hoist." She remembers , "when the school before the current old Charlottesville school burned in fire...it caught in the basement...it burned for a month... Lois Mae also tells that they would go to the elevator to get corn cobs to burn to keep warm...If we had money we might have jowl bacon with our beans or potatoes or liver...my mother did house work for \$3.00 per week...we were born in the depression an we made our own Christmas cards." Thanks Lois Mae. Does anyone else remember the Great Depression? My dad was in the Civilian Conservation Corp. What do you recall?

Bob and Delores Kemper want to know about their house at 529 N. Swope Street. Bob says it has logs in the living room and the home has been built on several times. I believe that the original part of the home does look like a log cabin. In reviewing the abstract Benjamin and Agatha Osborn became owners of the property in 1843.The deed included eighty acres. If this is a log house it would be an old one? What do you think?

Have you been in the new popcorn shop on Main Street. I do believe that the Mason family owns it and it is called Snap. Crackle , Pop. I am almost certain that the building was the location of Fair's lunch, original home of the wet tenderloin. Do any of you remember Fairs Lunch? No woman allowed! I have been told that under the paint in the bathroom is a mural that Riley painted. I wonder if that is possible?

I ran across a story about Dr. Ralph Wilson in Amish Mennonite Enterprises. Dr. Wilson served as Shirley physician. According to the story, Dr Wilson had delivered 3500 to 4000 babies during his practice. One day a young state policemen stopped the Dr. while he was traveling through Kennard.. Dr. Wilson read the troopers name and said,:"Sonny, you haven't been paid for yet! You are still on the books! The trooper replied.'have a good day, Dr. Wilson" Dr. Wilson died MAY 6, 1954 after serving the town of Shirley for 57 years. He served from 1897 to 1910 with a horse and buggy and later with an auto. His office was moved to the museum complex in Shirley as an exhibit area. It was formerly Beverly's Flower Shop. In 1959 Dr. Charles Holland took over his practice through the efforts of the Shirley Lions Club.

2008-12-18

Carolyn Engleking called the other day about her home. it seems that two people stopped by and said that her home was the second oldest in Hancock County. Carolyn lives on 350 N before it ends at Grandison. Her grandfather was Joe Cook. Others who lived at the home were Earl Huntzinger, John Collins. and one Mr. Louderbach. Does anyone know anything about property in the area? What do you know?

A 1996 issue of *Traces*, the Indiana Historical Society magazine tells us about Mrs. Wambaugh aka Miss Clara Bottsford. For several years she was a teacher in the Greenfield Schools and a aspiring poet. She was also in love with James Whitcomb Riley. According to *Traces*, "She met Riley in 1877 when she went to Greenfield to teach after the death of her parents and boarded with the Riley family...she was a dark-eyed with black hair and high complexion. She and Riley fell in love and their romance lasted until 1885. This romance was documented by an extraordinary collection of letters...published in the New York Times...in 1917 a year after Riley's death... Headlines appeared 'Riley love Letters Found' The Poet was devoted to the school teacher for eight years... 150 and letters from Riley to Clara told of an ardent courtship...In his last letter Riley asked her to return all the letters he had written which she obviously didn't do..." Subsequently Miss Bottsford married a saloon keeper. She kept the letters until her death.

2008-12-10

By
Joe Skvarenina

Malinda Lowder writes, By the way I mentioned this vintage photo I have you might want to use in your column. Here it is ! It is a vintage photo of a parade of the Redman's Lodge around 1900. It was taken from the balcony on the building across the street from Bradley Methodist looking east. Notice the interurban tracks in the photo. The Interurban would come out to Greenfield and stop at the Riley Hotel. The Hotel was located in the empty lot next to Tom William's law office. The interurban would go out to Riley Park almost to the Brandywine. Near the creek they had a turnstile to turn the engine around and then it went back to the Indianapolis. I think that the turnstile might have been at Riley Park Tire. The old section of Riley Park Tire being an interurban garage. Last, I believe that the Redman's garage was above Andrea's Florist. At least the old Bar is still upstairs. Malinda says that the picture was the property of her grandfather Woodrow Wilson

Kinnaman who died several years ago.. He had left it to Malinda's mother. Thanks you Malinda.

John Jackson writes that Ira Fisk was sheriff and so was his son Joe. Joe was the founder of Fisk Sanitation. In the 1930's according to Jackson, Fisk took a leave of absence from Eli Lilly and started a trash pick up business with a trailer pulled behind his car. Joe Fisk was sheriff in the 1950's when the alleged killers of Noah Fry were first incarcerated in the jail. Red Kleiman followed Fisk and Jackson has a faint memory of Comstock and Mulvahill. as possible Hancock County Sheriff's.

In Jim Bradbury and Fred Bixler tell us that the office of Hancock County Sheriff was established in 1828 soon after Hancock County was established. The first Hancock Sheriff was John Foster. Mr. Foster served until 1830. There has been 48 unique and separate individuals who have served as Hancock County Sheriff over the years.

2008-11-18

By Joe Skvarenina

Sherry Stevens writes, about nine months we bought a big white house just east of the old Charlottesville High School on the north side of US 40. It is 150 years old. She was wondering if anyone knows any history on the house and who lived there long ago? Also, Lisa Darger writes to see if anyone knows any information on her home 3808 East 500 South. Her house was probably built in 1900. She is having a hard time finding any records. What do you know? Roy Ledbetter emailed, if thinks that the Interurban picture last edition does look like it is in Charlottesville but he was wondering what happened to Copeland Grocery was setting out front of the this house. It was a long steel building. Also in this photo you do not see Joe Fisk's meat market which was in the old bank in that area. This would have been around 1934, 1935, or 1939. Do you know the location of the photo?

Gene Crider called and he is from Fairland. He remembers when Marjorie Main came to town when he was a boy in 1947-48. She drove around in a big black limo. He was in the 7th and 8th grade at the time and the kids chased the limo all over town. He also tells you can spot a native when they say Fairlund instead of Fairland. By the way Marjorie Main was Ma Kettle from the movies. Do you remember Ma Kettle?

Thanks to Eva Shaw for her story about the farmer and auto salesman to long to print here. It was appreciated. Mrs. Ray Murphy from Pendleton tells us her brother was married in the Mt. Lebanon Church and would like a copy of the history when it is completed. It should be done soon.

Mary Lou Poe shares with us a copy of the Friends 1931 Year Book and church directory for Greenfield. According to the directory in 1889 Nathan and Esther Fame to Greenfield to set up a series of evangelistic meetings in the Old Masonic Hall which is the current location of Rodafields. They were assisted in their efforts by Westland Friends. A new meeting house was completed December 15, 1890 and addition was added in 1913 on North State Street currently apartments. The church is on the west side of the road across from the Post office. In 1904 the Greenfield church was no longer a subordinate meeting to Westland Friends. In 1931 the membership was 169 and the Pastor was Eliezer Partington. One infamous preacher at the old church was Daisy Barr (1902-1904). Much later in her life she ended up in Florida running for Congress and was the head of Women's division of the white supremacy group. She died in an auto accident in Florida.

Kyle Smith and Amanda Fultz I do believe from the local chapter of Ghost busters have contacted me and about their ghost busters group. I do believe they spent the evening in Linde laundry trying to find the Bruner family. They have a web site www.c-c-p-e.com.

2008-11-09

By Joe Skvarenina

Go down Oak Blvd and there is a gentlemen who sits in his garage in a white rocking chair. That is Jim Baker and he is a Railroader. If you want to hear stories about the Railroad or American Legion baseball you might want to stop by and visit with him. Baker tells us that his parents Burt and Edna bought an ice and coal business in Greenfield in 1946. The business building and ice house was located on the corner of South Pennsylvania and Depot Streets about seven feet from the Pennsylvania Railroad Tracks. The coal yard was across the railroad tracks on the east side of Pennsylvania Street serviced by a spur from the main track. Baker goes on to add, "In 1947, there were four other coal companies in Greenfield: Beagle 3030 East South Street; Broadway Lumber, 203 Center Street; Wolf 201 Center Street; and Greenfield Ice and Fuels, Railroad and South Riley." Did your parents own a business in Greenfield let me know?

By Joe Skvarenina

Drive down Oak Blvd and you will see a gentleman sitting in his garage in a white rocking chair. He is Jim Baker. He is a railroader and a long time participant in Legion Baseball.

Jim came to Greenfield in 1946 with his mother and father, Edna and Burt Baker to go into the Ice and Coal business. The business office and Ice House was located at the corner of S Penn. and Depot Streets. The coal yard was seventy five feet across the Railroad track. There were four such businesses in Greenfield at the time which included Beagle's, 303 East South; Broadway Lumber, 203 Center; Wolf, 201 Center Street, and Greenfield Ice and Fuel, Railroad and South Riley Streets.

I went to the Franklin Township Historical Society Annual meeting the other day. Sylvia Henricks long time Society President, ten years or more, is stepping down. The Franklin group is putting out a calendar with some really interesting photos of old homes in Franklin Township. They also run the former Big Run Baptist Church as a museum. It is open from March to October. Do you know the famous person came from Franklin Township or Wanamaker? It is Marjorie Main who was Ma Kettle.

Good Shepherd community recently celebrated the accomplishments of one resident, Geraldine Wright Alford Day who was born June 21, 1921. She is a family historian, poet, painter and avid collector of sea horses. During Geraldine's day punch and cake was enjoyed by all.

Jaon Peter Hughes provides us with the photo. Her mother Leone Peters Hughes went to live with her Uncle and Aunt Ernest & Lena Cranfill on the Old National Road in Stringtown. She moved there so that she could ride the interurban to Charlottesville High School. She graduated in 1924. Next she rode the Interurban to Butler. She graduated with a teachers degree in 1927. The track was on the south side of the national Road. Did tracks stay until they built the four lane road? I think they are still there? What do you think?

I do believe the Interurban photo is taken in Charlottesville. I do recognize the house.

Joe Settles farm was called Ox Team and we are still attempting to determine if it was a stage coach Inn on the National Road. What do you know?

2008-11-02

> By Joe Skvarenina

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> Did your candiaite win. Boy what an election! The road to the White House actually went through Hancock County with Bill Clinton here. I know that I actually got calls from folks in town wanting me to come home to see him. My friend Trina said every Republican office in town holder was in attendance Clinton's speech Barry Goldwater and Gene McCarthy were in town during their campaigns. I guess one spoke at the car wash on west 40 which is now gone. Indiana was a player in this current election. Indiana also has also been a player in past elections. This is especially true from the Vice Presidential standpoint.

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> For example, Schuyler Colfax was a South Bend resident and editor of the "St Joseph Valley Register". He was Speaker of the House of Representatives from 1863-69. He was Vice President under Ulysses S. Grant.

>

> William English was Democrats nominee for Vice President in 1880. Prior he served four terms in Congress 1853-1861. Thomas Hendricks from Shelbyville served as 16th Governor of Indiana. In 1876 he was the running mate of Samuel J Tilden who lost to President Rutherford B. Hayes. This election was thrown in the House and as a result of a deal troops were withdrawn from the south. Charles Wilson Fairbanks was Theodore Roosevelt's Vice Presidential running mate in 1904. During that year at a party he served Manhattan cocktails at his house on North Meridian with Theodore Roosevelt in attendance. This was during a period of intense temperance in the Republican party. As a result he was removed from the 1908 General Methodist Conference and he was known as Cocktail Charlie Fairbanks. He was Roosevelt's Vice President from 1905- 1909. In 1923 his house was purchased by Indianapolis Insurance Company and still stands near the Children's Museum. John Kern was the running mate of William Jennings Bryan who campaigned in Hancock County several times. Kern was a twice unsuccessful democrat candidate for Governor. Thomas R, Marshall was Vice President under Woodrow Wilson for 1913-21. Marshall had a dry sense of humor. He was known for saying after a Senate debate for saying , " What this country needs is a good 5-cent cigar." On January 30th Dan Quayle was sworn in as the 44th Vice President of the United States Quayle was the youngest Senator elected to the Senate from Indiana.

2008-10-26

by

> Joe Skvarenina

>

> It was a dark and stormy night. The moon cast an eerie haze over the landscape. I was walking home late one Halloween eve about 10 p.m. and I had the strange feeling that I was being followed. You know that strange feeling that you get when you know something is just not right. Maybe it was an over active imagination or maybe I had just eaten too much candy. But there is more... Elizabeth Crisman at Linde Laundry feels the same way.

>

> Elizabeth Crisman who does alterations in the shop next to the Pizza King swears the place is haunted. She has been there at midnight and has actually seen the man, woman and female child that haunt the place. Her sister has seen them too. When I went there the other day she wanted to know what was on the property before the store was built.

>

> in 1899 Mary Ladd Bruner and her husband lived in the house at the site and practiced medicine in Greenfield. Dr. Bruner was the first woman physician in town. She was born in 1855, and graduated from Earlham College in 1877 and from Woman's Hospital in Chicago in 1885. She served as a trustee at Earlham and was Chairman of the State Board of Children. She was a charter member of the Greenfield Friends Church. She died November 1942. Also during current times Pizza King was a grocery store and later a drug store.

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> So you be the judge.

>

> Larry Hunt tell us that Boyd's Grove School was on the NW corner of State Route 9 across from Edgar Moore's Auto repair shop.

2008-10-22

By Joe Skvarenina

>

> Thanks for the emails and photos. It is appreciated.

>

> Larry Crump wants to know who has the negatives from the old DaJo photos. He wants to get copies of his kids photos. Larry can be reached at lecrump@sbcglobal.net.

>

> Diana Watkins wants to get copies of the books by Charles Elmer Fox of Refer Charlie. Does anyone have copies they would sell to her?

>

> Dwayne Roland wanted to know the location of Lemon's School were his father attended.

> John Peters Hughes tells us that Leamon's Corner was on the southeast corner of 300 N and 600 E. She tells that his mother Leone Trees peters went to school there for 7 1/2 years and then graduated from Boyd's School. She then went to Charlottesville School. The picture shows of part of the school on Uncle James Scott farm now John Scott's farm. Joan wants to know if anyone knows the location of Boyd's School House?

>

> The Binford indicates the first school in Hancock County was established in Blue River in 1823. In 1824, schools were established Greenfield with Sugar Creek, Harrison (Center) and Jackson following in 1830. In 1836 Green, Brown, and Vernon townships developed school houses, The first schools were constructed of logs daubed with mud. Each had a large fireplace. In the 1880's the school which were built of brick with either a T plan or a gabled front. These are the schools which you see today. Woodbine school was buit in 1882 located County Roads 450 and 300 N. is a gabled front , the corner of 100S and 100 E is Macedonia School. This now houses the Macedonia Baptist Church. Macedonia is also a gabled front. An example

> of a t plan would have been the one which was located on County Road 100S beyond meridian Road. Lilly demolished it some time ago. In the 1880's Center Township included the following schools Shepherd, Macedonia, College Hill, Nebraska, Ash Grove, Independent, Boyds, College Corner, Judkins, Frazier, Danner, White, Leven, Lundion, Woodbine, Slabtown, and Benevolence. In the earlier day Greenfield had two schools one for black s and one for whites. Do you know the location of slabtown?

2008-09-14

by

> Joe Skvarenina

>

> Thanks for the calls and conversations. It is appreciated.

>

> Bob Schreiber writes that the Gooding Tavern was on the southwest corner of Main and State. He also tells that he once bought a 1934 car on a lot on the site.

>

> marie Ferguson says the Bodkins was on the southwest corner of State and North Street and she worked there at one time. Does anyone have a picture of the Blur Goose tavern for her?

>

> Ms. Hoeppner call and tells that a cabin was found in a house on 300 North east of Mt. Comfort Road. Phyllis Kingen tells that the cabin has been given by the owner to Trinity Lutheran school to be moved to church property. Do you have a cabin in your farm house?

>

> Betty Kerrigan writes , " while researching the interurban Rail Line that ran from Dayton Ohio to Indianapolis. I ran across a picture of one of the rail cars going through downtown Greenfield.. I was wondering if anyone remembers the 'railcars' that ran down the middle of the Old National Road and would like to share stories with us." Greenfield businessmen promoted the Interurban Line between Greenfield and Indianapolis.. Contract for construction awarded to C.M. Kirkpatrick of Greenfield. Work started in 1899 with the line carrying passengers regularly on June 17, 1900. The early promoters of the line included F.G. Banker, William C Dudding, C.M. Kirkpatrick, Nathan C. Binford Lorenzo E. McDonald, R.A. Black and Elmer Binford. The line was later owned by the Terre Haute, Indianapolis, Eastern Traction Line.

>

> Service in Greenfield came to a halt Jan 15, 1931 when Carl Knox piloted last car over the line at 4am. Riley Park Tire served as an Interurban barn. There are tracks in the old section of the building. More to come on this at a later date.

2008-09-05

- > Joe Skvarenina
- > Thanks for all the conversations. It is appreciated.
- >
- > Phyllis Kingen tells us there will be a milk can supper to benefit the Hancock County Historical Society September 13, 5-7, at the Shelter House. The tickets are \$10 and you can purchase them from any Historical Society Board member . I also have tickets.
- >
- > Can you feel fall in the air? I can.
- >
- > It was in 1883 that the 'Old Swimmin Hole and Eleven More Poems' was published in Indianapolis and Cincinnati
- >
- > The discussion still goes on regarding the true location of the Ole Swimmin Hole. Riley never really indentified the site.
- >
- > On April 24, 1965 issue of the Indianapolis Times addresses the controversy. Harry Roberts then 71 was interviewed as a source of the story. The article reads in part, "The location of Riley's Old Swimmin Hole is a subject that brings all sorts of answers from old timers. For example Brandywine Creek runs just east of of Roberts" Lake cutting it into a point. Riley park is south and east from the Lake."
- >
- > "Some people say Riley was swimmin at a spot now in the park," Roberts said , " others say his swiimin hole was just below the spot where the creek comes out of my lake.' Other say the City just wanted to honor Riley so they just set the "Ole Swimmin Hole" where people could get to it. Some say Riley probably never went to the same place twice..Others tell us the "Swimmin Hole" was on the south side of 40. there is a pond by the Railroad bridge which would have made a dandy Swimmin Hole
- >
- > The bottom lines is no one really knows the location. What do you think?

2008-08-29

> by

> Joe Skvarenina

> Thanks for the emails and visits. It is appreciated.

>

> I stopped in Mason's Rare and Used Books in Lebanon the other day. They really have some great history books. Also some Riley volumes for really cheap.

>

> Have you ever gone to Souteastway Park. It is on Carroll Road and cross the center line and your are in Hancock County. I was attending Bug Fest which is an annual event at the Park. Several hundred people were in attendance. Youngsters can get a PhD. in bugology and learn about Indiana's insects and bugs. You can even eat some chocolate covered worms. In the fall they do Maple sugaring. I got to meet Stuart Lowry the new Chief Operating officer. He seems like a nice fellow and we all look forward to great Indy Parks.

>

> Bonnie George Lyons writes "...as children in the 1940' and 1950's my sister and I lived on Spring Street with our George grandparents.... Harberlie's market was about a block east and a block south of our home. Each day my sis or I would walk or ride our bikes to the store to get the meat for that evening's meal. Candy bars were 5 cents and bacon 19 cents a pound. Just east of the market was a shoe repair shop that also sold second hand comic books. I also remember Shorty Bodkin's Cigar Store of State and Pennsylvania. He had a case with penny candy and we could drop in on our way to or from school. Do you remember Santa Claus flying in(minus reindeer) to the airport on East 40?"

>

> Bob Schreiber shares with us a 1948 directory of Greenfield and it is fun to look at the old ads. Do your remember Jack Leahy Ford Dealership, Roberts Modern Trailer Park,Lanham Sand and Gravel, Greenfield Ice Cream , Browns Cleaners,Byrne Pharmacy,or EA Sweetland? From 1961 and 1962, do you remember the Bandy Box Beauty Salon or McCullers Market? Do you know that Greenfield Ice Cream Parlor is Mad Dog Pizza right now? What stores or businesses do you rememeber from the 1940's and 1960"s.

2008-08-20

> By

> Joe Skvarenina

>

> Thanks for all the calls and e mails I appreciate it.

>

> Jim Bradbury writes, Leamon's Corner was located on the range lines where sections 13, 18, 19, and 24 meet. It has always been a well known corner of the township. For many years a post office, a little store, a blacksmith shop and a saw mill were maintained there. The post office was kept by Cyrus Leamon from a very early day but was discontinued in the summer of 1881. The blacksmith shop was operated for a number of years by Bud Phillips who ha previously operated a blacksmith shop for a number of years in Blue River Township. The little store was kept until the time the post office was taken away.

>

> Phil and Sharon Hunt write, We have a little map that shows a Leamons Corner "Pike" as what is now 300 North East of 600 East. School #4 is right in the SE corner of the intersection. Is this the one? In Center township 300 North is marked Herr Pike while west of State Route 9 it is Pendleton Pike. Does anyone know about these names?

>

> Joe Settles house is east of Greenfield but north of the lane going west. kate mcKinley tells us that it was once a stage coach inn. Does anyone have further details on this?

>

> I meet Theria Tomkins the other day at the Shirley Founders Days, thanks to Donnie Munden. Ms. Tompkins has lived in the Shirley Hotel on North Main Street since about 1952. According to one description, 'Each room had a washstand, with pitcher and a bowl and there were rag rugs on the floor. There wasn't any bathroom, just a room with a path for everyone. Many of the people who stayed there were the overseers of the factories in town.' The story goes on to tell, " the hotel served meals to many people, not just to the people staying there... The sleeping rooms were mostly upstairs on the east side. " The hotel office, dining room and kitchen were on the ground floor. The owner was often known as the pie artist.

>

> I do believe that Theria is 84 years young and according to her she was born during bowl and pitcher days. When I inquired what that meant she called me a big dummy and told me that it meant when people had outhouses.

>

> Did you go to Founders days in Shirley? It was a great time. I got to be the judge and master of ceremonies at talent night in Shirley. Three very taleted young people, a wonderful singer and a dog act. Everyone was very dynamite. I gave one first place to the dog and everyone else got second place. I really enjoyed it and happenings like this is what makes Indiana great. Thank you for including me. After Theria and the Talent show I left town, just kidding.

>

> I Went to a board Meeting in Greensburg the other day. The President of the board , Thor Henrickson, asked me if I knew why a tree had grown in the Greensburg CourtHouse. "I it was because the clock had springs. Da Dum.

2008-08-13

By Joe Skvarenina

Thanks for all the information. I really received some very interesting material.

Joe Settles wants to know if his home was ever a stagecoach Inn. He lives west of town on State Route 40. At one time the house was in the west lane of 40 before it was moved back. Do you know, the address is 6132?

Nancy Wooten Gross writes from Lake Wales Florida. "Thanks for writing on Vivian Pierson Ramsey, My father Dephra Jean Wotten was her brother." She goes on to tell, "She loved big hats and i guess that will be the biggest things I will remember about her."

Emogene Walker Young shares with us the history of the Charlottesville School and the community which is currently in the cornerstone of the old building. Her grandfather, Tom Walker, delivered those remarks at the dedication of the cornerstone in 1936. The first teacher in the township was Leartus Thomas but there are no records where he taught. The first public school was at Leamon Corner later known as District 4. Do you the location of Leamon Corner in Hancock County? Some very interesting facts can be gleaned from the document. On December 23, 1935 the immediate previous building to the current one burned down. Another Charlottesville school was destroyed by a cyclone in 1886. So that is at least three schools stood in the spot.

Thomas Walker goes on to tell us in the document some other interesting facts about the community. For example Lincoln's Funeral Train stop at Charlottesville and several hundred people gathered at the Depot. Also in 1893 a special train bearing the Liberty Bell on its way back to Philadelphia from the Columbian Exposition in Chicago stopped at the Charlottesville Depot. School children marched to the Depot to see this historic bell.

Mr.. Thomas goes on to tell us, "I knew Riley as a boy and man. His first entertainment outside of Greenfield was given at Charlottesville. He hired a livery rig for one dollar when his troupe reached Charlottesville, he found the house filled, but the audience had been admitted without pay. It was decided to give the play and pass the hat, which they did, with the result of total receipts of 37 cents. In returning home they ran the tollgate to avoid paying of the toll and when they reached the livery barn they bluffed the liveryman by asking him to change ten dollars, and it was some time before the livery bill was paid, but the Charlottesville people had the honor hearing James Whitcomb Riley's first away from home entertainment."

2008-08-06

By Joe Skvarenina

Thanks for all the conversations. It is appreciated.

Lois Mae Pearson writes there are other places with houses built around log cabins. Her brother Floyd Sipe owned the location of the Vet practice on the west side and she indicates there was a log cabin at this site.

Mrs. Edna Martin writes, I moved into Greenfield in 1954 from Willow Branch. Edna provides us with a clipping from the Indianapolis Times with a 1965 view of Greenfield from an airplane. The town had a population of 10,000 at the time and it looked it.

Phyllis Kingen invited me to attend Faith Lutheran's 55 and over get together at John Scott's. I don't believe that I am old enough but I went. They had a milk can supper. You put sausage, cabbage, carrots, corn on the cob, potatoes and water and put it over an open fire. It was really very good. At the get together 93 year young Laura Eggeman told stories about going to school in the good old days. She is quite a lady and she makes rag rugs on her loom.

My Aunt Helen once owned a corner grocery. Do you remember those types of stores. If you drive around Greenfield you will notice many a houses that look like it had a store attached or a house that looks like a store. These establishments were the staple of every neighborhood or small town. The 1916 directory lists Fred Owens, John Morrison, C. Bert Orr, Rock & Son (North State), Strickland's or the White House, Star Store, C.E. Vaughn, and Earl Walsh grocery stores.

During the 1930's you could add to the list with Webb's Market (North State),ay Moor's Market (West MAIN), kERN'S MARKET (WEST Main), AND LiNEBACK'S Market(West Main).

On the south side of Main Street Sullivan's, Haven's, Fisk Regal Market, Rihm's Market, Waggoner's Market, McCuller's Meat Market, Kroger's, Gashibautgh, Lambert's and Chew's Regal Market. Also add: Utterback's (Howard),Knight's (Douglas), Miller's (Spring & Walker), Link Gorman's (Grant), Arch Walker's (Pratt), Hiday's (Fourth Street) Swift's (Fourth and School), Ayres (Firth Street), Witte's Noble-Wilson),Nick and Nellie's (Walnut 7 Noble), Robert's (Franklin), Neff's (Franklin & Main), Gorman's (South Penn.), Matthew's (South State, Kinders (Riley) Revers, Forman's and and Wiggins Market, Robbins Fruit Market (South East), A&P, Standard Market, Larry Bishop's Market,Boyer's Market (Apple Street), Huffman's Key Hole, Peter's Market, and Mc Clarnon's Market (North State)

In many cases the owners sold on credit and the store was located at their house and they probably made enough to buy their own groceries.Did I miss any stores?

2008-07-31

By

> Joe Skvarenina

>

> Thanks for all the conversations. It is appreciated.

>

> I am a member of the Board of the Shirley Historical Society and August 15 and 16 they will have historic 2008 Shirley Founders Day. Food, fun, flea markets, kids games, ball tournaments , all types of concessions, and a talent show will take place. Every is invited to participate in the Talent show and a entry form is included with this column. Flea market space is free. For further information call the Shirley Hardware at 765-738-6415.. I will hope to see you. I a master of ceremonies at the Talent contest and I know we have a lot of potential stars in Greenfield. Hope to see you.

>

> What do you know about Shirley? It is a community with much history and some of the community is located in Henry County. The county line goes down the middle of main street. Shirley was platted in 1890 by John Landis but wasn't officially named Shirley until december 13, 1898 when it was incorporated by the Hancock County Commissioners,. It was named in honor of a Mr.. Shirley, a conductor on the North and South which ran through the town. The community originated from a boxcar placed at the junction of the North-South Branch of the Cincinnati, Wabash, and Michigan Railway and the East-West line of I.B. & W. Railroad. This site was used as a telegraph office and depot until 1893. On October 16, 1908 the town of Shirley was practically destroyed by a fire. It started on the Hancock County side. The property damage was estimated at \$65,000. In 1910 and 1911 for better fire protection the community built the Shirley Water Plant.

> One big company in Shirley was the Shirley Creosote Company which was located 1 mile north and extended over 3/4 mile long. In 1914 the plant moved away but for years concrete foundations seen along the Big Four Railroad near Route 234.

>

> One more story, Mr William Trail was one of the early pioneers and a run away slave. He entered, dirched, and farmed his land for the rest of his life.

2008-07-17

by
joe Skvarenina

Thanks for all the emails and conversations it is appreciated.

Did you see in the Daily Reporter that the post office has decided to take Central Park on Grant Street because they need the space. It is their property but I hate to see it happen. I remember taking my daughter to play at the site. Also the Parks Department used to have Debbie Reynolds and Doris Day movies in the Park during the summer. All the neighbors would go watch the movies and fight the bugs. If this happens I hope that Post Office plans to stay at the site.

Do you know that ora Myers was instrumental in securing the current Post office for Greenfield. He was postmaster from 1928-1932. Mr.. Myesr was born in Greenfield on October 7.1874. He was the mayor from 1910-1914 and 1917-1921. He was also General manager of Home Insurance. Myers was admitted to the bar in 1922. As a member of Indiana House of Representatives he chaired a committee to construct State Route 9. This eventually became the Highway of the Vice Presidents. Do you know why?

Melva Jean Harding Smith shares with us the her pioneer heritage when she tells us about the the Boles family. Her mother was a Boles. It seem that one Abram Boles moved to Hancock County around 1859. Mr. Boles " possessed mechanical skill of a superior order, and was an expert at any kind of handicraft within the province of his trade." He was a blacksmith and was well liked by his neighbors He was an influential worker in the Democratic Party and also a leader in the Christian Church. His death occurred in 1878 or maybe 1879.He is buried in the Mt. Lebanon cemetery. But his tombstone reads he died June 8, 1872. His wife lived until 1916. At the time she was living with her son in Finly. The family were Scotch Irish Presbyterians who frequently settled this are from Kentucky.

Mike Pershing wants to know if anyone know about a big cabin 700 E South to 450 South, about a quarter of a mile on the south side. It is by a big white vacant house and two story wood barn? I would like to see a list of log cabins in Hancock County.

2008-06-30

> by

> Joe Skvarenina

> Thank for all the emails and conversations. I enjoy talking to each and everyone of you.

>

> Jane Wilson Dobbs provides the picture of the Old County Home or County Farm. It was east of Greenfield on the Old National Road and Jane tells us it was torn down circa 1995. I do believe that all that is left now is the Sheriff's shooting range and a set of steps. The contract to build the building was signed december 12, 1883. The poor farm was 217 acres of good farm land. the building contain the Administration in the front section. Inmates' kitchen and dining room in the basement. men were on the first floor and women were on the second. A gas plant was in the basement to provide a source of lighting. It had steam heat. Mush is served frequently during the winter. The salary of the Superintendant was \$1,000. the physician made \$ 200. In the early days they were nine men and seven woman inmates.

>

> Information in the Greenfield Herald Newspaper at the time indicates,"On Sunday last, it was the pleasure of the Herald to visit the county asylum. We found Superintendent Ollie Richey who had charge of the institution for four years without even as much a word of censure from the county commissioners in his usual good humor...This is one of the four county asylums in the state that is self sustaining..."

>

> The clump of trees on the north side of the road , a little west from the site of the farm is a pauper cemetery for the inmates. If you walk in the area you will sunken spots which indicates the graves.

>

> In 1907 a plan was subitted by the ladies of the Clio Club in Greenfield to convert the county farm into a boys dormitory and industrial training school.Nothing further came of it.

2008-06-17
Joe Skvarenina

Thanks for all the emails and letters. It is appreciated.

Jane Wakefield writes," Five years ago my husband and I bought an old farm house on a few acres of land. By chance, we met the great granddaughter of the man who built our home. She was gracious enough to share many of her family photographs with us. April 16, 1835, Milas Reece purchased land in Blue River Township through a land grant from Andrew Jackson. He started to clear his 120 acres which was no easy task by hand. The land was originally covered with dense forest and swamps. He built a small log cabin for him and his wife Mary Fellows Reece. Somewhere between 1835 and 1854, Milas built a clap board house. He and Mary had two sons who died as small children, cleared more land for farming and wore himself out and died in July of 1854. The land was deeded over to Mary.

Across the road from the widow Mary Fellows Reece, lived Isaac Beeson. Isaac also lived in a log building in which he ran a pottery business. He made jars jugs and other household items." Isaac allowed his log house to be used for a meeting place for the Western Grove Friends Church. "Isaac's oldest son, Mahlon, married Mary Fellows Reece and they lived on her farm and had five children. MAHLON, as other farmers in Hancock County, had swamp problems. It is hard to cultivate wetlands. His father Isaac, began to make field tiles on his potter's wheel and made over seven hundred rods of tile, seven inches in diameter to construct a drainage system in Blue River Township. Some of the tiles are still used today."

The photograph was taken in 1876. You can see the cabin and the clap board house built by Milas Reece. According to Jane, the cabin probably fell down and the clap board house was torn down. Jane goes on to tell, "We have the bricks from the chimney and the lilac bush blooms every spring. Our house was built by Jesse W. Beeson, son of Mary and Mahlon Beeson in 1912 and stands in front of where the clap board house.. Mahlon and Mary Beeson lived out their lives together."

Thanks, Jane.

Lois Mae Pearson writes she knows of another cabin incased in another building. It is located at 513 N. Wood Street and was owned at one time by Howard and Vivian Pearson who lived there for years.

Does anyone remember Vivian Pearson Ramsey who wrote columns in the Daily Reporter and other publications for years. What do you remember about her?

When I wrote for another publication for a period of time we put together a History of Hancock County by decades and people contributed essays to each decade. Does anyone have a copy? I would like to have one. I would appreciate it.

Nanette Cain writes about Charles Elmer Fox. She has a copy of "Weeds and other Good Things to eat" which is autographed. For those who wonder, it is out of print.

Dianna Walston from Wilkinson writes and wants Reefer Charlie's books. "Tales of an American Hobo" was published by the University of Iowa Press Iowa City Iowa. Also I know of no book of his poetry. Copies of the Daily Reporter are at the Greenfield public Library you can look up his columns there. I am writing a history of the Daily Reporter and will include some columns and poems in that text. Stay tuned.

Faith Lutheran Church in Greenfield recently sent off one of their members ,Brandon Froiland, to his ordination as Assistant Pastor of Christ Lutheran Church in Platte Woods Missouri. He is a recent graduate of the Fort Wayne Seminary. I watched Brandon growing and I am sure he will do an excellent job. There are four Lutheran Churches in Hancock County at the current time. Sis you know there was once a Lutheran Church in Charlottesville probably in 1875?

2008-06-12

By

Joe Skvarenina

Thanks for all the e mails. it is appreciated.

Margaret Kinsey writes , " I moved to Greenfield in 1966. If my memory serves me correctly a portion of SR 9 was still brick at the time, especially in front of the hospital. Is my memory faulty?" Yes Margaret SR 9 was brick at one time especially around downtown and around the Courthouse. The old photos show it. But around the Hospital I don't know for sure. Do any of you remember it being bricked?

Bridgett Jones Curator of the Historical Society Museums shares the following note from Bob Hunt. "Last weekend while climbing through an old attic in a Downtown Greenfield commercial building that had been unused for many years, came across the following signature painted into the wall, 'Will Vawter March 19, 1891.' The room is where it's painted is kind of a storage room, but does have a regular permanent stairway access to the room. The building is (I would believe) about 1885-1890, possible older."

Hunt goes on to add, " A bit of research told me that Will Vawter was born in 1871, moved to Greenfield when he was 6 as of the above date in 1891 he would have been 19 or 20. He took his first job as a newspaper illustrator in 1891, so he was working as an artist at the time? Does anyone know about this early Vawter? He didn't start working for Riley until 1893 as an illustrator."

Mr. Hunt, according to my research, Will Vawter is buried in Park Cemetery. His first professional work outside Greenfield was for the Indianapolis Sentinel in 1891. Later he did work for the Cincinnati Gazette, Indianapolis News, Success, and The Presbyterian. He also did drawings for St. Nicholas Magazine, Judge, Life and other periodicals. His first newspaper drawing was for the Hancock County Democrat. He was best known for his Riley poem illustrations. Vawter produced life like people and scenes that were an accurate portrayal of the times. It is said that the door of the old Houston residence on Pennsylvania (once known as West Street) and south Streets was painted with one of his works. His house was the Dutch Colonial behind the Memorial building and it still survives. In 1902 he married Mary Howe from Chicago. In 1910 he moved to Brown County and did many oil paintings. He was a pioneer member of the Brown County Art Gallery. In 1923 he married Ola Genolin in Nashville. He died February, 1941 at the age of 69. Do any of you know more?

Are you tired of the rain? The Greenfield flood of March 1913 resulted from a steady 48 hour rain. The Brandywine flowed down main street like a river. It carried away every bridge in town.. It began on March 24, 1913 and crested on Tuesday March 25, 1913 when it flowed over the the National Road.

2008-06-05

by
Joe Skvarenina

Thanks for the comments and emails. It is appreciated

Have you seen in the paper that they are voted on changing the Indianapolis Airport name back to Weir Cook. Col. H. Weir Cook was born in Wilkinson Indiana. His father was a country doctor. The family home in Wilkinson is still in existence. Col. H Weir Cook died in a P 39 crash on March 27, 1943 at New Caledonia where he was in command of local American air bases. Col. Cook was born June 30, 1892. He was a hero of WWI but was over the age limit for participation in WW II. Cook wrote the Army that he wished to be involved so he was sent to the Pacific theater. He is buried at the Punchbowl Cemetery in Hawaii. Col Cook was a member of Capt. Eddie Rickenbacker's 94th Aero Squadron in WWI. He became one of America's early aces shooting down seven German planes, He was later placed in command of the squadron. He was honored with the Distinguished Flying Cross and French Croix de Guerre. I do believe that some of the family still live in the county. If you go to Wilkinson the town park is dedication to Cook. The park also displays information about Cook.

Melba Smith reminds us that the Hancock County Historical Society Museums are now open on Saturday and Sunday from 1-5pm. The cost is \$2 adult and \$1 . Group tour are also available. This would be a good thing for your club or organization to do. If you are interested in a group tour call Melva at 752-0022.

The picture is moving day for the Peter Pan DINER which was located at the current site of the City Hall. The Peter Pan was the chief restaurant downtown from 1961 until March 1966. It is now located on 38th Street in Indianapolis. Prior it was located on State Route 67 and was known as the Red Dragon. The Peter pan was open from am to 11 pm.

CO Montgomery tell us about the Dye Cemetery located in Sugar Creek Township on 300 West. It is down a steep incline and bordered by the Railway right of way. There are only 4 Tombstones in the family plot. The earliest burial was 1868. The daughters of Lucretta are buried there but she is not. it was owned by the Dye's.

2008-05-20

By Joe Karenina

Thanks for the conversations and emails. It is appreciated.

Rosie Helms writes that after Doris Fox dies Charlie Elmer Fox son put him in a Greenfield nursing home and according to Charlie bulldozed the Charlottesville house and all the hobo memorabilia in it. Rosie tells the last time I went to visit Charlie at the Nursing home he was ready to marry another resident. But I don't know if it happened. He died in the nursing home. Rosie also says the correct name of the book is "Tales of an American Hobo". Does anyone know anything else about author, hobo, Elmer Fox?

Another source tells me Charlie Elmer Fox was born June 6, 1913 in a log cabin on the Ohio Erie Canal in Vigo County. He was a naturalist, and a forager beside being a hobo. He was the oldest of nine children and claimed to be Irish, Scotch, Welch, German, French, and Delaware Indian decent. He spent 39 years in the welding trade. What also do you know.

The poet Barton Rees Pogue grew up in as house on North Spring Street which was once lived in by former Mayor Pat Elmore in Greenfield. Pogue was a poet who followed in the footsteps of James Whitcomb Riley. He quit High School as a sophomore to become a printers clerk in Mitchell's shop in Greenfield where his first book was published. In 1917 he won first prize in the National Intercollegiate Prohibition Oratorical contest. He became famous in the 1920's for broadcasting his poems for 12 years on Station WLW in Cincinnati. He taught speech at Taylor University. He wrote for the Indiana's Farmers Guide. Newspaper Syndicate, the Indianapolis Times , Good Housekeeping, and Ideals. He published six books. Author William Herschel the same type of writer declared that Pogue, "depicts the Hoosier types with real skills." It is interesting to note that I found one of Pogue's books in a used book shop on Washington Street and it was autographed.

2008-05-11

By

joe skvarenina

Thanks for all the conversations. It is appreciated

Did you ever hear of Charles Wiggins? He was Fortville's heavy weight boxing champion. He thought of them and his rabbit punch was delivered to the likes of Jack Dempsey and Gene Tunney just to name a few. Although Wiggins never won the world's title he did become the heavyweight champ of the country of Australia. Who was this man? He was born in Fortville and raised by Mr. and Mrs. George Walker. At the age of 14 he left Fortville to seek his fortune. He learned boxing at the Jack Dillon club in Indianapolis. He fought in tent shows at Greenfield. Charles Wiggins quit the ring in 1927. In the fall of 1937 he was found lying unconscious in the 100 block of West ohio in Indianapolis. he had been in hospitals mint time for skull fractures.

The American Legion in Greenfield will soon be building a new Headquarters on Osage. The present location on American Legion Place was once the Felt residence. It has been the Legion home since they moved into it in 1950-51. The American legion was chartered in Greenfield in 1919. When the Memorial building was built in 1922 the meetings were there until the present post was built. The first clubroom was above the old Pickett's Hardware. In fact if you go in the current Clubroom now you will see the light which hung at the street level at the Picketts location. William E. Bussell was a lawyer and the first commander. He went out of office in 1920. American Legion started the American Legion Junior Baseball and the Old Sprinkling Can contest that many people in town remember today. Mayor barry Hurley changed the name of South East Street to American Legion Place in 1968. There are also American Legion Posts in Fortville, New palestine and Charlottesville.

The Legion was been good community citizen over the years and we wish them the best in their new home.

Have you ever stopped at the Tollgate Herb farm on 40 in Philadelphia. It is run by Judy Bradford and she lives in what I believe is the old toll gate house on the National Road or Route 40. Do any one you know if her place is the old Tollhouse?

2008-05-08

By Joe Skvarenina

Thanks for all the emails. It is appreciated.

G. Christopher Stanley writes that Charles Elmer Fox was also known as the "Reefer". This refers to a refrigerated box railroad car. He lived in Charlottesville at the time of his death with his wife Doris. Stanley tells, " I was introduced to Charlie at Hancock Hospital when I was in school by my mother who was also a friend of his." He wrote two books "Weeds and other Good Things to Eat" and "Tales of the American Hobo." Tales is an autobiography of Fox and his brother Frank. Does anyone know how long Mr. Fox wrote a column for the Daily Reporter?

Michael Page Mattix writes about a Feb.12, 1996 article I wrote in the paper. He quotes,"Local attorney Page Watson tells us about his involvement in the Battle of the Bulge. He was executive officer with the 334th Regiment 84th Rail-splitters Division Company I, who captured 16 German prisoners at a very crucial time." Page was Michael's grandfather and he would like to know more of the story. Michael, I don't have anymore. Do any of you know about Page's adventure. I spent most of the evening looking for it to no avail. On November 10, 1993 I interviewed Attorney Melville "Page" Watson about the Brady gang and his father, Clarence E. Watson who was sheriff at the time. The Brady gang was in the Hancock jail under change of venue from Marion county.They ere waiting trial for murder of a police officer and perhaps others. They were quite notorious and claimed to be more dangerous than the Dillinger gang.

The break happened on Sunday morning. It was my Watson's custom at the time to do the housekeeping of the cell. The jail was located across from the courthouse now the Hancock County Prosecutor's office. Sheriff Watson had emptied the waste paper baskets from the cell and had opened the heavy iron door to put the baskets back in the cell. Brady, Shafer and Dahlhoffer were seated with their backs to the door. When Watson opened the door Brady jumped up with a yell and threw himself into the door opening. The sheriff knocked him back inside the cell an stepped inside to close the door behind him. to keep them from escaping. Earlier in the escape they had succeeded in breaking a piece of the metal work from the jail. The struck Watson on the head with it and got the door open. Brady and the sheriff were fighting to gain control of the iron bar. Watson and Brady fought down the hallway. They eventually ended outside. Edgar Ridlen and his wife were driving by and stopped to assist the sheriff. the gang ended up stealing Ridlen's car to make their escape. They were later picked up by the FBI.

Page's father salary in those days was \$75 per month. Watson was sheriff from 1934-1938.MichaelI hope this tells you something more about your family. Grandpa Page was IU student at the time of his father's great battle with the Brady gang.

2008-05-01

Path to the White House

By

Joe Skvarenina

The first Presidential election held in Hancock was on November 3, 1828 and 101 votes were cast with the county population being 400. Local attorney Thomas Walpole was a Presidential elector and canvassed part of the state for Taylor and Fillmore. It was because of the of the 1840 election campaign of Walpole vs. Chapman that the Democratic national emblem of the rooster was born here in Hancock County. In 1843 Martin Van Buren took a tour of the west after his defeat in the election. He was a democrat the the drivers of the stage were whigs. In reaction to the fact that Van Buren vetoed funds for the National Road improvements the driver dumped the stage near the old log jail. In the presidential election of 1860 the county voted 1,202 for Lincoln and 1,289 for Douglas. An old legend has it that Lincoln stayed at the old Cleveland Inn . on July 19, 1862 the hancock democratic convention was addressed by Thomas A Hendricks of Shelbyville. Hendricks was samuel j. Tilden's vice president in the contested election of 1876, Tilden vs.. Rutherford B. Hayes. Hayes of Ohio won the election. Later Thomas Hendricks became Grover Cleveland's vice president. On Oct 30, 1896 former President Benjamin Harrison came to Greenfield and addressed the Grand republican Rally.

One particular Republican rally for Mckinley served 10 oxen, 1,500 chickens, and 20,000 buns. A Democrat response to the festivities in a local newspaper indicated,"The republican barbecue owing to rainy weather and the Bryan atmosphere in all parts of the state, the barbecue held in the city on Tuesdays was not a success in the point of attendance. The food was cooked in the furnace of the nail trust in the city. While hungry Republicans were eating the food produced on the farms, they ought to have turned their time and attention to those producers of wealth which the present gold standard is sucking the life blood from every farmer and making every farmer in the country poorer..."

On July 27, 1899 William Jennings Bryan spoke at the fairgrounds (the current hospital) to a crowd of 200,000 people. In 1903 Bryan made two speeches in Hancock County with one being on the east side of the courthouse and the other at Gant's opera house. I also believe that Bryan was in Fortville.

On July 20, 1926 former Governor James M. Cox , Democrat candidate against Warren G. Harding, stopped in Greenfield long enough for the "street light" to flash go. He was on the way to Indianapolis for a funeral.

In 1948 Harry Truman made a now famous whistle stop in Hancock county.

In 1960's Eugene McCarthy and Barry Goldwater jr. campaigned in Greenfield.

> Now Bill Clinton.

2008-04-23

Thanks for all the emails and conversations. It is appreciated.

I am looking for some photos of events relating to the Daily Reporter., Events or individuals anything that might be good in telling a story or writing a history of any community organization. What do you know and what can you show?

marie perguson wants to paint the old Grand Hotel and the Blue Goose Inn. Do any of you have any? The Grand Hotel is the current location of Riley Emporium. The Blue Goose has been turned into apartments. the Blue Goose is across the street from the coop near to the old depot.

Jim Arthur writes "I firmly believe the correct spelling is Delany...all the tombstones in the Delany cemetery say Delany. No mistake on just one. John recorded written will says Delany...The typed last will and testament of "sarah Delaney" but the signature was Sarah Delany...The Binford History of Hancock County lists John Delany as one of first settlers but the antidote says John Delaney. The Hancock County Death Index lists sarah Delaney and a Sarah Delany both female, colored, 69 at age of death died 6 December 1887. in New Palestine and recorded in book CH-2 page 39 and book H-24 page 241. Sara was the daughter of John Delany." You genealogists have a difficult task on hand. Arthur home which is the old Delany Inn has the family cemetery next door. This is the most significant African American site in Hancock County.

Did you know that the yellow Dutch colonial house behind the Memorial Building was once the famous artist Will Vawter's house, He lived in Greenfield before he went to the Brown County Art Colony. According to some rumors there are pictures painted on the walls in the basement? Did you know there was once a poultry house at the site of the Memorial building. Did you know that the stone well house built by the women's club federation in Riley Park is called Irving Springs. Irving was a black man who lived near the site in a log cabin. His name was Irving Hunt and he was a friend of Riley's. Do you remember when Charles Elmer Fox wrote a column about being on the rode as a hobo. He wrote a book entitled "Weeds you can Eat" ? There is one on the shelve at Annie's Restaurant. Fox lived in Fortville.

2008-04-08

By
Joe skvarenina

Thanks for all the emails and letters. It is appreciated.

Joe Munden is looking for historic police photos. If you have any let me or him know. Before it is too late the boys in blue want to capture some of their proud heritage. Let's help them out.

John Neargardner is still liking for the Warrington Race track and writes I was able to find an advertisement for a race at Warrington date July 25, 1895. The ad mentioned the times of and the purses to be awarded but no directions. *I went to the Courthouse and looked at the land transfer records and drew a blank. The only thing that I could find was William Garriott sold 40 acres but it didn't say to who.*

Holly Trees Miller writes, "My father Everett Trees Sr. is now the oldest resident in Warrington. He has lived here all his life and he is now 96 years old...The race track sat on our ground just to the west of the Nashville Road. For many years you could tell where the track laid and the bank of the curves. Now that it is not real visible but my Dad and I know the location. We still use the Race Track well for water...I have heard about the track all my life and would have loved to have seen it in the day when folks came for miles around for a 'fair' and horse races. Uncle Lewis Trees owned the ground and sold it Elmer and Laura Keller-Trees and they felt racing was not "above board" so after a year or so they sold the track." The Grandstand was blown down in a violent thunder storm on June 25, 1902 along with other buildings at the track being damaged. A revolver was found in one of the horse stalls. It made then wonder what type of folks hung around the horse track. Charlie Trees owned race horses and had a son of the "Great Dan Patch."

Ruth Trees Cole writes that the track was on her Grandfather Elmer's' farm. She was Russell's daughter. There were three Tree's brothers, Russell, Forest and Everett.

Jennifer Swindell writes provides us with a few pages from the Brown Township History written in 1976 by the Harlan sisters, who were her aunts. The History says the track was located back of the site of the Trees Trailer Sales is now." I don't know if the Trailer sales still exists? After the '1902 storm Elmer would not approve rebuilding the track. For that reason a smaller track was built on the Porter Copeland Farm about the location of Johnny's orchard.. According to the Harlan History, The track was popular for a few years. When Wilkinson began to grow, a track was built there. During the Warrington race-track days, a night spot flourished near Nashville(Hancock County). The after the race crowd gathered at a place across for the Nashville church site. There was dancing and 'wine, women and.' It was considered a respectable place by those who frequented it, and daring by those who did not.. The place existed only as long as the race track was popular."

Enough. I have told you everything that I know and some things I don't. Talk to me.

2008-04-07

By Joe skvarenina

>

> Thanks for all the emails and letters. It is appreciated.

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> Joe Muinden is looking for historc police photos. If you have any let me or him know. Before it is too late the boys in blue want to capture some of their proud heritage. Let's help them out.

> > Holly Trees Miller writes, "My father Everett Trees Sr. in now the oldest resident In Warrington. He has lived here all his life and he is now 96 years old...The race track sat on our ground just to the west of the Nashville Road. For many years you could tell where the track laid and the bank of the curves . Now that it is not real visible but my Dad and I know the location. We still use the Race Track well for water...I have heard about the track all my life and would have loved to have seen it in the day when folks came for miles around for a 'fair' and horse races. Uncle Lewis Trees owned the ground and sold it Elmer and Laura Keller-Trees and they felt racing was not "above board" so after a year or so they sold the track." The Grandstand was blown down in a violent thunder storm on June 25, 1902 along with other buildings at the track being damaged. A revolver was found in one of the horse stalls. It made then wonder what type of folks hung around the horse track. Charlie Trees owned race horses and had a son of the "Great Dan Patch."

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> Ruth Trees Cole writes that the track was on her Grandfather Elmer's' farm. She was Russell's daughter. Threw were three Tree's brothers, Russell, Forest and Everett.

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> Jennifer Swindell writes provides us with a few pages from the Brown Township History written in 1976 by the Harlan sisters ,who were her aunts. The History says the track was located back of the site of the Trees Trailer Sales is now." I don't know if the Trailer sales still exists?After the `1902 storm Elmer would not approve rebuilding the track. For that reason a smaller track was built on the Porter Copeland Farm about the location of Johnny's orchard.. According to the Harlan History, The track was popular for a few years. When Wilkinson began to grow, a track was built there. During the Warrington race-track days, a night spot flourished near Nashville(Hancock County). The after the race crowd gathered at a place across for the Nashville church site. There was dancing and 'wine, women and.' It was considered a respectable place by those who frequented it, and daring by those who did not.. The place existed only as long as the race track was popular."

2008-04-03

By

> Joe Skvarenina

> Thanks for all the email and materials. It is appreciated.

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> The pictures are of the fire at the Maxwell High School on April 5, 1955. The students attended McCordsville for the rest of the term. On August 1, 1955 Eden and Maxwell were consolidated into a new district, Hancock Central. The first school year started in September with the upper six grades going to Maxwell and elementary students going to the Eden building. A new Board was formed consisting of members at large and representatives from the Center and Green township Advisory Committees. Center Township Trustee Harry Davis was President and Green Township Trustee Marion Jackson was Treasurer. Other school Board members were Thomas Butcher, Gene Pope and Roy Bradley. M.K. Holzhausen was high school principal with an enrollment of 294. B.L. Smith was principal of the elementary school with an enrollment of 396.

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> I went to the Annual Meeting of the Jane Ross Reeves Octagon House Foundation the other day. Darrel Deck told an interesting tale. He indicated that he had just planted two wedding trees at the end of Octagon House driveway. According to Deck the wedding trees were usually cedar which when growing would grow together at the top eventually coupling. By the way this house has been moved to Shirley. Jane planned and built the house in 1879. In those days it was believed the octagonal houses were efficient. Each floor had eight rooms, four rectangular and four triangular. The house was constructed of poplar and white ash from the Reeves farm.

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> Ann Hatfield writes, we moved to Greenfield and my mother thought Truman was the greatest President who ever lived. She took me to see him and we got close enough to the train Truman shook my hand and gave me a kiss. I was 9 or 10 and I didn't wash my face for a week.

2008-03-18

by Joe Skvarenina

Thanks for all emails and letters. It is appreciated.

Tiana Gerald writes that she lives at 920 E.400 N. in a 100 year old house. A stone house was built next door by the same family.

According to some the Gerald house was a chicken and turkey farm at one time. Does anyone know about this house?

Lori Maynard writes and want to know if anyone has information on United Chain Works that operated in Maxwell from 1902-1911. The plant was located at the site of Independent Concrete Company that now exists in Maxwell. The Company manufactured chains for US Warships. At one time it was said to have employed 900 people. According to Maynard there is a original hand written deed at the Courthouse from William and Mary Woodall selling the property to United Chain.

Peggy Hall Karnes writes about her walk down the Pennsy Trail with the dog Max. She tells, "One of things that occurred to me when I was walking and reminiscing was the gathering on the railroad tracks with everyone else in Greenfield to greet Harry Truman, his wife Bess, and his daughter, Margaret as they took a train trip through Greenfield. I remember the President actually taking time to shake my hand and asking my name...I remember how proud I was to actually meet his daughter...I thought she had the most beautiful singing voice...I remember the big old tower right there by the tracks all of the boys were climbing on to get a better look." She goes on to tell on the other side of the Pennsy trail on Pennsylvania Srteet," I come to what was Jim Gorman's grocery store-it is still a tidy, neat building today." I do believe this is currently the used appliance store."When I look at the other side of the Pennsy Trail, I see what was the old milk and ice cream company(now it is a pizza place)." She goes on to tell,"The canning factory is gone-I am not sure exactly...bit I do remember truck loads of tomatoes that used to go down osage Street to the cannery."

2008-03-11

Mollie Oneal Aloiz writes, "I have a 116 year old school house on East 300 North. The stone marker reads Woodbine School, District No 14, built 1892, by W.H. Thompson. On the inside the boys had engraved their initials and heights on the door frame. Also in the attic is the board that the builders sign when the structure was completed. They were from Farmland Indiana and the completion date was August 12, 1892." Mollie bought the building from Warren Sims. He claimed that there was a town next to the school house that burned down. After the fire all that was left was the school and the house which was directly across the street and owned by Paul and Judy Goodwin. According to Sims there is a log cabin inside their house. Mollie wants to know if there was a town of Woodbine and she would like to find out more about it.

Mollie I really don't think there was a town in Hancock County called Woodbine. That simply is the name of the school. Here is a Woodbury but that is near to McCordsville. Today Woodbury is just a sign on the road and probably a Methodist Church. There were several towns in Hancock County which are now names on a map. Do any of you know about a Woodbine community? Other towns like this include Charleston and Berlin. In addition Center township includes several one room schoolhouses like Shepherd, Macedonia, College Hill, Nebraska, Ash Grove, Independent, Boyd's, College Corner, Judkins, Frazier, Danner, White, Leven, Lundion, Woodbine, Slabtown, and Benevolence. Greenfield had two schools during this time one for whites and one for blacks

By the way, two basic forms of school house buildings were used in the 1880's- a gable front and a T plan. The door is usually centered in the front and three or four evenly placed windows line the sides of the building. The T plan type of building is composed of two intersecting gable roofed sections in the form of a capital T. According to some local teachers Woodbine was also known as knothed.

2008-03-03

by
Joe Skvarenina

Thanks for all the emails and letters. It is appreciated.

Jim and Phyllis Arthur are attempting to determine the historical significance of the Delaney Inn , their home, on the Brookville Road in New Palestine. According to Arthur " James Parker of Rush County, Indiana was issued a United States land patent signed by President John Quincy Adams for 148.24 acres in Hancock County Indiana in 1825. John Delany purchased the same 148.24 acres on February 2, 1883 for the sum of \$1,300. John Delany sold the same 148.24 acres to William Nichols on September 27 1860." Phyllis is a Nichols.

The Binford History of Hancock County tells us that John Delany as being one of the first land entries, settler. and merchant in the area. According to the history he sold his goods at a good profit. When asked what percent he made, he replies that he was not a scholar and knew nothing about the percent. "When he bought goods for one dollar and sold them for two, he didn't think he lost anything." The 1916 Richman History of Hancock County states that Delaney operated a tavern along the Brookville State Road many years before the Civil War. Mrs. Delaney was known as a good. cook for miles along the old state road. The license fee records for the county shows that Delany paid in 1833 for a grocery business, 1839 for a grocery and liquor business. Henry Lantz remodeled the house in 1914 and described it as modern structure of thirteen rooms with roomy porches concrete drives, fine lawn and a lovely grove of maples. In 1914 it was lighted with acetylene gas fixtures and had indoor plumbing. The original rafters may be seen in the attic created with a Prairie style roof.

The US patent Record indicate that John Delaney acquired the land from the United States Government between 1834 and 1838. According to the 1860 US Census John Delaney was a male, 70 years old. mulatto race and born in Virginia. In 1860 he reserved .25 acres for a grave yard. This is the only African American Cemetery in Hancock County. Go to see it.

I have included a photo with the article. Does any one know anything further about the Delany Inn?

One rider provides additional information to Lori Maynard from Rickman History," A saw mill was established at Maxwell by Richard Hagan and Curtis and later owned by W.S. Gant, Coffin & Company, F.J Wickers and Fremont Gant.. The boiler in this mill exploded on the afternoon of September 15, 1902 instantly killing Thomas Sitton and William Bailey, and severely injuring Walter Cooper, Roy Sutton and Fremont Gant. The force of the explosion was terrific and produced a shock that was felt for miles around the mill. The first mill stood north of town, but was later moved west of town and north of the tracks where the explosion occurred.'

When you send me an email please be sure to also include your name.

Enough. I have told you everything I know and some things. I don't. Talk to me.

2008-02-28

by

Joe Skvarenina

Thanks for all the emails and letters. It is appreciated

Mr. and Mrs. Richard Manship write, "Five years ago we purchased 40 acres on 900 North and 400 East. Sugar Creek divides the property in half. This was the old Paul Keaton place. We have been told that there was once a Speakeasy along the Sugar Creek behind our place. We were wandering if you or the readers could tell us anything about it?" Do any of you know? I know that there was a speakeasy in McCordsville and a road house on Fortville Pike.

Dana Hamm writes the barn is located on the south side of the road not the north. According to Hamm 'the barn is made of concrete blocks, rare for a barn of that age. Hancock County GIS system says it is pre 1900... Since 2004 it has been owned by Robert and Beverly Frost."

Lori Maynard wants to know more about the Maxwell disaster. Maxwell grew around the intersection of State Road Nine and the Old Bloomington and Western Railroad which was organized in 1881. A sawmill exploded on September 15, 1902 killing and injuring several people. The mill was located west of town and the shock was felt several miles away. can anyone add to this?

To Rich Trautmann and the boys at Saturday morning Bible study here is your answer. A post office called Kinder was established on April 28, 1847. The name was changed to Carrolton on January 26, 1869. On September 5, 1905 the post office was taken away. In march, 1915 it was reestablished under the name of Finley in honor of Congressman Finley Gray. The railroad adopted the name of Reedville for the station. Common folk called Tailhot which Riley immortalized.

Enough. I have told you everything that I know and some things I don't. Talk to me.

2008-02-14

By

> Joe Skvarenina

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> Thanks for the letters and emails. It is appreciated.

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> Rosalie Richardson and Cathleen Huffman writes," when the Historical Society put up a Historical Marker in Cleveland it said Mr. Abraham Lincoln as a boy stayed at the Cleveland Inn. Now someone has placed tape on it that says Andrew Jackson was one who stayed there." I have read in other places about Lincoln and Andrew Jackson so the legend persists. But I do believe that it is legend. The dates the National Road was constructed through the county do not match. What do any of you think?

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> Rob Young emails does anyone have the sign for the Old Riley pool? The Old Riley Pool was opened July 4, 1930. By Sunday July 6th 577 people had used it. It was closed in 1970 and eventually demolished. Do you have the sign in your basement?

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> Betty Lyons for Anderson tells about her family member Elisha Coffin who resided in Blue River township. He joined the service of the United States May 1863 6th Calvary at Charlottesville. He was confined to Andersonville the fall of 1864. He died of the effects of the Confederate prisons December 2, 1888 at 40 years of age. He is buried in the Gilboa cemetery.

2008-01-28

Injuns
by
Joe Skvarenina

Thanks for all the converstaions, email and otherwise. I do appreciate them.

Ms.Amy Hoeppner writes her friend Gale Good is the son of JB Good who was the principle of Mt. Comfort High School in the 20's and 30's. His grandfather was Fremont Estes decendent of Obadiah Estes who was one of the first settlers in Buck Creek Township.Amy lives in the house that Fremont built in 1901. Mr. Good tells her that there was an Indian mound in Crump Woods not far from her location. Good says that his mother used to tell about Indians coming by the house and looking for the location. Accoding to some there are Indians and settlers buried together in Buck Creek Township.

The earliest possible Indian artifacts found in Hancock County date back to 9000 BC.There are ninety five identifiable acheological sites in the county which cover the Paleo Indians to the Archaic period along with the Woodland Indian culture.Arrow heads along with stone implements are still found in Hancock.In addition skeletons have been discovered in gravel pits over the years. For example on the north side of the National Road west of Sugar Creek, a skeleton with burial relics was found several years ago.

What do you know about Mound Buildders or other Indians in Hancock County?

2008-01-18

By

> Joe Skvarenina

> Thanks for all the telephone calls and emails. I guess you are interested. Jim Webb called and he said racing on the track stopped when someone was killed in a accident. He also wants to know if anyone remembers the midget racing on the south side of Route 40 in the area of the old gas station close to the Brandywine. According to Jim they would also flood the track and have boat races with flat bottom boats. Carnivals would set up in the area when they would come to town, also.

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> Ron Myers called and said the old dirt track is still there back in some trees around 300 south. Lisa Caudell says that Dewey Leary owned the track. Jim Baker also remembers the track.

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> Mike Burrow emailed and indicated that Dewey and Margaret Leary once
> owned the 40 acres the track on which the track was located. According to Burrow Dewey," had a small dirt track. The track didn't have anything paved and as such, it is now just a field surrounded on all sides by the woods...the track was shut down when fellow was killed during the race out of fear of liability... a fellow named Cobb Wayne was killed is a wreck on a third turn in September 1947...some tell the story that the guy was decapitated." According to Burrow neither the newspaper stories or the death certificate didn't indicate that Mr. Wayne shall we say lost his head? Maybe it is an urban legend.

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> Everett Kyser said he was 11 years old when all this happened. According to his brother in law he and the two boys climbed a tree to view the race when a helmet rolled in front of them with the head still in it. You decide.

> Kyser also tells about Midget and Boat races across from Riley Park Tire

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> Don Myers called and he said his dad was the flagman at the dirt track. His nickname was "Black Flag." He tells motorcycles might have raced at the track after auto racing stopped. He tells that the Midget Racing was run by Everett Leary and Ivan Dudley was the ticket manager. So the 'Midgetdrome' was different than the old dirt race track on South 9. They would also race on the old McCordsville Dog track by auto dealership on Route 234 as part of a circuit

Unknown Date

By Joe skvarenina

Thanks for all the conversations. It is appreciated.

Lois Mae Pearson writes there are other places with houses built around log cabins. Her brother Floyd Sipe owned the location of the Vet practice on the west side and she indicates there was a log cabin at this site.

Mrs. Edna Martin writes, I moved into Greenfield in 1954 from Willow Branch. Edna provides us with a clipping from the Indianapolis Times with a 1965 view of Greenfield from an airplane. The town had a population of 10,000 at the time and it looked it.

Phyllis Kingen invited me to attend Faith Lutheran's 55 and over get together at John Scott's. I don't believe that I am old enough but I went. They had a milk can supper. You put sausage, cabbage, carrots, corn on the cob, potatoes and water and put it over an open fire. It was really very good. At the get together 93 year young Laura Eggeman told stories about going to school in the good old days. She is quite a lady and she makes rag rugs on her loom.

My Aunt Helen once owned a corner grocery. Do you remember those types of stores. If you drive around Greenfield you will notice many a houses that look like it had a store attached or a house that looks like a store. These establishments were the staple of every neighborhood or small town. The 1916 directory lists Fred Owens, John Morrison, C. Bert Orr, Rock & Son (North State), Strickland's or the White House, Star Store, C.E. Vaughn, and Earl Walsh grocery stores.

During the 1930's you could add to the list with Webb's Market (North State),ay Moor's Market (West MAIN), kERN'S MARKET (WEST Main), AND LiNEBACK'S Market(West Main).

On the south side of Main Street Sullivan's, Haven's, Fisk Regal Market, Rihm's Market, Waggoner's Market, McCuller's Meat Market, Kroger's, Gashibautgh, Lambert's and Chew's Regal Market. Also add: Utterback's (Howard),Knight's (Douglas), Miller's (Spring & Walker), Link Gorman's (Grant), Arch Walker's (Pratt), Hiday's (Fourth Street) Swift's (Fourth and School), Ayres (Firth Street), Witte's Noble-Wilson),Nick and Nellie's (Walnut 7 Noble), Robert's (Franklin), Neff's (Franklin & Main), Gorman's (South Penn.), Matthew's (South State, Kinders (Riley) Revers, Forman's and and Wiggins Market, Robbins Fruit Market (South East), A&P, Standard Market, Larry Bishop's Market,Boyer's Market (Apple Street), Huffman's Key Hole, Peter's Market, and Mc Clarnon's Market (North State)

In many cases the owners sold on credit and the store was located at their house and they probably made enough to buy their own groceries. Did I miss any stores?