

# The Newcomer

A Publication of the NEWTON COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY Inc.

INDIANA'S *youngest* COUNTY



Vol. 1, Issue 3

December 1994

## A LOOK BACK

Kyle D. Conrad

Here's what was happening in and around Newton County in October of 1944, as reported in the Newton County Enterprise.

"The board of county commissioners met in their regular session in the office of Jane H. Beagley, county auditor Monday of this week. A contract to furnish groceries for the county farm for a period of three months was awarded to William Spradling of Morocco."

"A matter of ditch business was discussed but no final decision made. Claims for the past month were passed and ordered paid by the board. Their next session will be the first Monday in November."

(October 5, 1944)

"ENROLLMENTS IN CO. SCHOOLS ARE DOWN - Total of 1986 in Twelve Schools; War and other factors the cause.

The pupil enrollment of the schools of Newton County is as follows:

Morocco, 399; Goodland, 360; Kentland, 334; Mt. Ayr, 202; Brook, 197; Lake Village, 150; Ade, 130; Roselawn, 86; Enos, 44; Thayer, 34; Colfax Center, 44; and Foresman, 43.

The enrollment in the first grade shows Morocco in the lead with 50 beginners...Kentland has the largest senior class, 34, Morocco is second with 32.

Since several families have removed from the county to defense areas to be nearer their work and many high school pupils have been taken by the Selective Service War Board, the enrollment is remarkably good. It is only ten less than last year's figure."

(October 19, 1944)

## CERTIFICATE OF ELECTION OF TRUSTEES MCCLELLAN TOWNSHIP CEMETERY

April 23, 1887

Organization of McClellan Township Cemetery Pursuant to notice the legal voters of McClellan Township met at the School House at McClellan Township, and on motion A.J. Ellis was elected Chairman, and on motion C.D. Holmes was elected Secretary. It was moved and carried its name should be known as McClellan Township Cemetery; and it was moved and seconded and carried that Alonzo M. Skinner, David S. Corkins, and Corrington D. Holmes was duly elected Trustees of McClellan Township Cemetery. Held on the 23rd day of April, 1887 in McClellan Township, Newton County State of Indiana.

C.D. Holmes, Secretary

I certify that the instrument in writing of which the above is a true copy was recorded April 30th, 1887 at 8 o'clock a.m.

Henry L. Parsons,  
Recorder of Newton County  
By Andrew Hall, Deputy

(Ed. note: Little is recorded as to the whereabouts of this cemetery. There are only two cemeteries listed on the 1904 plat map, the Morgan Cemetery and the Skinner Cemetery. The Morgan Cemetery is in Section 25 and the Skinner Cemetery in Section 30. The Skinner Cemetery is located on land owned by Andrew J. Ellis in 1904. Neighboring landowners were the Skinners. Could this be what was to be the McClellan Township Cemetery?)

From the Newton County Recorder Miscellaneous Record #3, page 114

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## LAWYERS ORGANIZE BAR ASSOCIATION JUDGE DARROCH NAMED AT BANQUET AS PRESIDENT OF ORGANIZATION

*From the Dec. 20, 1917 Newton County Enterprise,  
Submitted by John J. Yost*

The lawyers of Newton county formed a Bar Association last Thursday evening and enjoyed a banquet at the Arcade Hotel. The banquet was served in four courses by Mrs. Sarah Smith and was splendid in all its details.

Those present at the banquet were Judge William Darroch, R.R. Cummings, H.L. Sammons, John Higgins, T.B. Cunningham, Reuben Hess, R. O. Graves, C.E. Hosier, John G. Davis. Dr. O.E. Glock and Samuel R. Sizelove of Kentland, Frank Davis and W.E. Harry of Brook, and Harry Hopkins of Goodland. Messrs. David, Sizelove, Glock and Hosier were not members of the local bar, but were invited in to participate in the discussion of the questionnaire now being sent out to registrants under the draft law, and which the lawyers and other competent men are to assist filling out. This was the real purpose of the banquet and the questionnaires were gone over item by item and the lawyers are not prepared to give advice and assistance where needed.

Accepting the banquet as an opportunity to form a bar association action was taken accordingly. Judge William Darroch, den of the Newton county bar, was chosen president; Frank Davis, vice-president; R.R. Cummings, secretary, John Higgins, treasurer, and these officers together with R.O. Graves and Harry Hopkins will form an executive committee. T.B. Cunningham, H.L. Sammons and Frank Davis were named as members of a committee to draft by-laws and formulate a schedule of fees, to be reported at another meeting.



*Wishing  
You All A  
Joyous  
Season*

## THE EAST-WEST TRAIL SOUTH OF THE IROQUOIS RIVER

*Submitted by Velma Jean Dart*

I remember hearing Wm. N. Barten tell of deep ruts made by westward-going wagons behind the barn at his place (Elmer Barten's) at the end of his lane. This is 1½ miles north of Foresman near the center of Section 26. These ruts were a bit east of the barn and still showed when W.N. B. took over the farm about 1900. Since then, I have seen maps of the time, showing Elmer's lane to go all the way across Section 26 as if it was one of the earliest ways to get west.

This is why I have enjoyed trying to imagine the rest of the route that they took in their trying to avoid too many stream crossings and too much miring down in the low places.

When corn is about a foot high, you can perceive every little five feet of change of elevation. Jasper County stories tell of pioneer crossings at Rensselaer (where the river wasn't so big as downstream) and at Egypt (where one trail struck off south to Fountain Park and Gilboa in Jasper County). The trail that parallels the south side of the Iroquois River must have been for people off in the East who wished to settle off in the direction of Watseka or further. (U.S. 24 serves the same sort of folks who wish to stay away from mires further north and hills further south).

Larry Erb of Egypt just told me of a suspension bridge across Carpenter Creek at Egypt. He says that the trees still bear the marks of ropes that were used. He farms the west side of the area. Therefore it is one of his north-south fences that designates where an embankment was thrown up to accommodate the crossers going west until the travelers were away from the creek. Mr. Erb says that the crossing was north of the cemetery.

I made the trip starting at the I-65 overhead at Ind. 16, west to the Egypt Road, south (left turn) past Nesiuses and the cemetery - ½ mile. On this stretch of road, a beaver waddled across my route. At 1050 south go right over a gradual slope down to Carpenter Creek. There is a gradual ascent afterward; and, after turning the corner to go west, one passes the Erb place. Mr. Erb says that one can still see the gap in the woods where the old trail went through.

To get to Newton Co. follow 1180S west (Jasper Co. designation) south to 1100S to about 1080W.

All of this tends to pick its way over the higher ground. Then they likely headed south toward the very high point where the electronics tower now stands. If one turns west onto 1150S at the old Fenwick place on the corner, a mile later you go south and turn west at 1180W. Go south on Co. Line Road to 1100 South (Newton County numbering).

In Newton Co. continue west to 500 E. One quarter mile south of this point continues a low ridge from back in the Fenwick region. On this slightly higher spot on the Goodland Cemetery Road used to be the two Deno houses. Across the field west from there is where people had tried to cut across to Elmer Barten's sandy spot and good lane. (The 1876 map shows an east-west road at 1050S for two miles to Ind. 55).

From here I am not so sure. I like to think that they went a little south and west again to cross the water of (later) Hunter Ditch where there is good crossing at Art Weishaar's place in Sec. 32. However, they could well have gone further south picking their way near Weishaar Switch toward Gay Lawrence's, and thence near to Orchard Lake Stock Farm. (Maurice Barten knew of a burial place at a fence line on his place - a mile straight west of 55 and Elmer's). Obviously these people enjoyed keeping the Iroquois River south of them as far as the bend at Watseka.

Roads go both ways and a lot of settling early was a backwash from Illinois, including Bartens 1870 and Antcliffs 1900, both from Peotone, IL. Antcliffs came by wagon - with their dog (and the dog found his way back to Peotone). Antcliffs and others heading east would probably have gone around the Iroquois River too.

There used to be a species of tree that grew exceptionally tall. (Half again taller than other trees). It is cottonwood (poplar) and yes it drops a bothersome cotton-like product in the summer. There is still one right now at Lowell Putt's place. He lives on the Jasper Co. line north of Goodland; the tree is 125 feet tall in Iroquois Twp. Raymond Barten told of one at our house on 55, just a bit south of Barten Ditch, as having been spoken of as a landmark tree to early settlers.

It all fits together now. The tree was on the trail and could be seen almost to Egypt and probably off toward Kentland, before so many farmers planted osage orange hedge rows. Do you know of any special routes early people took to cross the county?

## QUERIES...

Requesting information on John J. Brenner who married Sarah J. Keeney (Sometimes spelled Keny or Kennedy). Need Date and place of birth, date of death and parents names for both individuals. Also researching the family of Ira A. Saylor and Mattie Brenner. Both sets of families from the Mt. Ayr/Jackson Township area. Bette Clemons, 1419 E. Rancho Drive, Phoenix, AZ 85014.



*Peace on Earth*

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A publication of the Newton County Historical Society, Inc.

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