

The Newcomer

A Publication of the NEWTON COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY Inc.

INDIANA'S *youngest* COUNTY



Vol. 2, Issue 1

April 1995

Colfax School

(The following article is based on one that appeared in the Morroco Courier in 1932. It was originally supplied by Cora McDonald with supplementary material added by Leona Kanne. It was submitted to us by Mr. Jack Severs.)

Colfax was the first township in the county to establish a real community center, where church, Sunday school, ladies aid, missionary society, farmer's clubs and institutions, lyceum courses, suppers, moving pictures, exhibitions, and various other forms of entertainment were regular features.

During the school year of 1918-1919 Colfax township had four school districts and employed the following teachers: No. 2 the "Wildrick" school, Katherine Schick; No. 3 the "Mead" school, Coralie Franklin; No. 4 the "Switch" school, Mattie Geesa; and No. 6 the "Harris" school, Esta Perigo.

Operations of schools were partially supervised by the people living close to them. The Mead school was built parallel to the road, but Mr. Mead thought the pupils were looking out the windows too much, so he turned the building around so the windows did not face the road.

Lovina Blankenbaker said of these schools, "We would walk to school two miles. Sometimes the snow was so high we couldn't see much of the fence, just enough of it so we could find our home."

At that time George H. Hillis, a county commissioner, and Alexander B. Tollin, two progressive citizens of the township became interested in the idea of consolidation of the schools. Mr. Tollin's son, Forest A., was then township trustee. These men, as leaders, held conferences and conducted a campaign of education which led to a meeting of interested citizens, at which

time it was agreed to a new, modern brick central building to serve the township.

The site of the building, which was donated by John J. Lawler, was at one time part of the 'Beaver Lake' region. It contained five and one-half acres and afforded ample playground for all kinds of school activities. The school was located in the center of the township so that it was accessible from all points.

The school building contained two recitation rooms, a large community center, play rooms, rest and library rooms, and indoor toilets for both boys and girls. It was erected in the year 1921 and the cost of \$18000, all but \$6500 of which sum had been paid at the time of the completion of the building.

The consolidation of the schools in Colfax Township, the result of the vision of a few of its enterprising citizens, had brought better things to all people within its borders. Through the social solidarity brought about by consolidation, latent talent to entertain was discovered in many different homes in the township, a widening vision of the people was very soon apparent, and the whole community took on new life. The problem of furnishing social life activities were solved and more contentment was the result.

The community center concept in the township was so well conceived that President L.N. Hines of the state teacher college, who was at that time State Superintendent of Public Instruction, used this as a model rural school for the entire state. This honor and recognition brought a great deal of satisfaction to the school.

The men's club of Kentland recognized the progressive things that the township had done by entertaining all the pupils and teachers in Kentland one day in April, 1921. The pupils were transported to Kentland in new

continued on next page

continued from previous page

buses which were the first to be used in the county to haul children to school. A banquet, a short talk by George A. Williams, a moving picture entertainment, visits to printing offices, the various offices in the courthouse, to the seedcorn house, and a trip to Orchard Lake Stock Farm were some of the features of the program prepared for the north end guests.

Recapitulating, we find that Colfax Township was the first township in the county to complete consolidation of its school districts, the first to install a moving picture, its own electric light plant, the telephone, and a cooking range stove. It was the first township to purchase motor buses and the first one to establish a real community center. Last but not least, the necessity of improved roads for the township were early recognized, and the road building kept with the improved transportation.

Another benefit of consolidation was a reduction in the number of teachers needed in the schools. The work which formerly required four teachers was being done in the new building by two teachers.

The Colfax school closed for good in 1954 at the end of the term. Pupils were transported to Mount Ayr grade and high school. On September 15, 1958 at 3:15 a.m. the school was demolished by fire.



GENEALOGICAL INSTITUTE OF MID-AMERICA

JULY 10-13, 1995

SANGAMON STATE UNIVERSITY
SPRINGFIELD, ILLINOIS

SPONSORED BY: The Illinois State Genealogical Society
and Sangamon State University

FEATURES

Nationally recognized faculty
Three intensive course options
Getting on-line with Internet

Evenings with a 19th century family history expert

Registration Fee: \$290 (includes 3 dinners & 1 banquet!)

FOR BROCHURE OR

FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:

Julie Slack • SSU • Office of Continuing Education
Springfield, IL 62794-9243 • 217/786-7464

The Kankakee Valley Review

May 11, 1917

Home of George Ade to Receive Beautiful New Decorations

(from The Lafayette Journal)

Submitted by Gerald Born

Miss Grace Tyner White of West Lafayette has returned from "Hazelden," George Ade's home near Brook, where she designed and superintended the work redecorating the residence. The color scheme employed is calculated to display to the best advantage the rare antiques collected by Mr. Ade in his travels abroad.

The entrance hall is hung in a paid (sic?) of East Indian embroidered panels done in bright colors. The rooms adjoining are harmoniously done in bright colors. The living room is hung in hand-blocked linen. The cushions and upholstery give opportunity for an artistic display of orange and vermillion. The hall runner and hangers are in a soft Indian rose effect.

The dining room is of an Italian greenish-blue with a chenille rug and silk hangings which introduce begonia color in bold design. The fixtures throughout the house are unique. In the hall and living rooms side-lights are made from Burmese incense burners, richly chased and inlaid and set with jade and Persian stones. The five upper rooms display individuality in decorative schemes, one having a gray Japanese and Chinese prints. The furniture is of Kaiser gray with the curtains and upholstery in gold.

The guest rooms are canvas painted walls of beautiful color with rich cushions and upholstery blending in color effect.

Mr. Ade has also erected a large log cabin 100 by 40 feet to be used for the gathering of the Hazelden Golf Club. The fireplace is constructed of "nigger head" boulders in the ladies' rooms and the cabin contains locker rooms, shower baths, the building is constructed of large logs taken from the grounds and the roof is of large Tennessee shingles. The chandeliers are long pendants of wrought iron with a drip candle effect. This building will not be completed until the middle of this month.

Early Years as a Telephone Operator

By Dorothy Johnson

I was a "Telephone Girl" back in the 30's! When I went to the telephone office to ask for the job, the Office Manager, Violet Lock, handed me a directory and told me to go home and memorize all the numbers. The office was located on the first floor of a big brick house that stood across the street from the present Morocco Post Office. Mr. Gordon Cailer was manager, Arthur Howell was lineman, Doris Hitching was chief board operator and I was hired in as the "extra girl". I worked from 11:00 a.m. until 3:00 p.m., then went home and return to work from 6:00 p.m. until 10:00 p.m. Lots of our subscribers were on party lines, six or eight to a line. A popular pass time in those days was listening in to your neighbor's calls. That way, news spread rapidly.

The operators performed many duties other than putting in calls. We had a list of people that we called every morning to get them out of bed. When the fire siren sounded we were flooded with calls wanting to know where the fire was. We had four local doctors at that time and we knew their whereabouts 24 hours a day. When the local basketball team was playing in our gymnasium, people called to find out the score. There were many gas stations and restaurants that had coin operated telephones and truck drivers made good use of them. It was always difficult for me to differentiate between the ping of a quarter or a nickel or a dime. The truckers were a friendly lot, and as you spoke with the same one often, you became good friends. The first time a trucker called in the middle of the night wanting to place a call to Paducah, Kentucky, I thought he was kidding me. I had never heard of a place and thought it was a cartoon name. I expect the Kentland operator down the line knew how to place that call. Part of the time I worked the night shift and that was a real challenge. We were allowed to open the roll-away bed in front of the switchboard, turn on the night bell and lie down, but there was never much chance in sleeping. One time I had to take time away from the board so I turned off the night bell, ran upstairs, down the long hall to the restroom. When I returned I laid down, forgetting to turn on the bell. In a couple of hours, an irate man who lived out in the country was pounding on the front door. His wife had gone into labor and he could not call the doctor. You can bet that woke me up! We had four or five grocery stores at that time. The store owners would come in the office with a bill of their sales and we would go in on a party line, wait for the receivers to all go down, then we would announce the bargains available at the different stores. They usually gave us a dollar for doing that. The doctors and lawyers were good to us. At Christmas they would bring us candy or flowers. It paid to be good to the telephone operators because she could help you in lots

of little ways.

A person could not get rich working for the Telephone Company. I think that I went to work for twenty-five cents an hour. The work was not that hard. My co-workers were all nice to me and it was a fun place to be. When the Telephone Company sold to a larger more business like company they immediately put a stop to all the little extras we were doing. No more answering the curious callers when the siren blew, no more calling and getting people out of bed in the mornings, etc. I expect that the service did improve but gone was the little friendly touch of helpfulness that we the subscribers had grown to like. Now, as I pick up my touchtone phone, punch eleven numbers and my daughter, in the city, answers on her car phone, I think we have come a long way Baby!

RESEARCH TIPS

BY DONNA EKSTROM

Genealogical Research and Time! How many times have we all said "I wish I had the time to spend on family research." Time is how we use it. If you just budget 5 minutes in your daily schedule, look at what could be accomplished over a period of a year.

Some suggestions that can be done in a few minutes are as follows:

CORRESPONDENCE, have materials needed to write those letters accessible, make a list of who you need to write for information, handwritten letters are easier and faster.

FILING, Start with those papers that need filing, file 2 or 3 papers at a time

PHOTOCOPYING, Put together a folder of items that need photocopying and place it in your car. They will be available the next time you are close to a photocopier. Most libraries have photocopy machines available for public use.

RESEARCHING, While you are visiting the library, have a list of addresses you need ready in your purse. Most libraries have telephone directories of other cities and addresses of libraries and genealogical associations. Go over an ancestor's pedigree chart or family group sheet and perceive what is needed in the search of this particular family. Take maps of the states you are interested in, study them or atlases of Europe and make a list of places and people you need information from.

RUNNING ERRANDS, Start a list of to-do and keep it handy so it's available for those spare 5 minutes when you are out doing errands. Go to the public library and retrieve that little bit of information or address you need. Go to the courthouse and make a quick look through the record books. You will be delighted in what you can do in a few minutes.

Organization is the key work in genealogy and managing time.



The Newcomer

A publication of the Newton County Historical Society, Inc.

Published in March, August, and October of each year. Articles for submission may be sent to the Editor, Kyle D. Conrad, P.O. Box 49, Kentland, IN 47951.

Membership dues to the Newton County Historical Society, Inc. are annual from July 1 to June 30 of each year and are as follows:

Student	\$2.00
Individual	\$5.00
Family	\$8.00
Institutional	\$25.00
Contributing	\$50.00
Individual Life	\$100.00
Family Life	\$175.00

Officers of the Newton County Historical Society.

President	James Robbins, Lake Village
Vice President	Velma Jean Dart, Goodland
Secretary	Robert Williamson, Morocco
Treasurer	Janet Miller, Kentland

The Newcomer

A Publication of the NEWTON COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY Inc.

INDIANA'S *youngest* COUNTY

P.O. Box 49
Kentland, IN 47951

