

The Newcomer

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Newton County: Indiana's Youngest County

The Kankakee River State Park and Forest Project

By Beth Bassett

In 1937, the Indiana General Assembly set the legal machine in motion for the eventual purchase of land for a recreation site within the Hammond city limits in Lake County, Indiana, to be known as Wolf Lake Park. The project was to be financed by a property tax of 2 mills, collecting yearly for seven years. (One mill is equal to \$1 in property tax levied per \$1,000 of a property's assessed value). The statute stated, "that after the lands have been acquired, they shall be established and maintained as a State Park by the Department of Conservation, in the same manner as other State Parks are maintained."

Who knew at the time that Newton County would benefit a decade later from this bit of legislature? One person may have ... Howard Hiestand, the joint Representative of Jasper and Newton Counties at the time. In 1947 partial funds of the Wolf Lake Park Fund would be diverted to a new fund called the Kankakee River State Park and Forest, creating a State Park and Game Preserve in Newton County, today known as the LaSalle Fish and Wildlife Area and Willow Slough Fish and Game Area.

History of Wolf Lake

The origin of the Wolf Lake name is lost in the fog of time, but it has been called that for at least 150 years. According to a history of the area written by August J. Ruf in the late 1940s, Abraham Lincoln and his family were frequent visitors, with Mrs. Lincoln nearly drowning there on one occasion.

Wolf Lake straddles the Indiana/Illinois State Line in Cook County, Illinois and Lake County, Indiana. Hammond, Indiana is the nearest city, with the Illinois side encompassed in the Chicago Park District. Their post-WWII Park program designated funds for development of Wolf Lake for recreational purpose for the working men of the Calumet area. In 1946 land was dedicated as the Wolf Lake Conservation Area. In 1965 it was renamed the William W. Powers State Fish and Wildlife Area. However, many still call it Wolf Lake.

Prior to construction of the dikes in 1946-47, Wolf Lake was a shallow remnant of Lake Chicago (an older, larger version of Lake Michigan) situated in a wetland area. According to Ruf's account, a sister lake on the Illinois side called Hyde Lake and another on the Indiana side called Mud Lake were filled in between the 1890s and World War II to create more ground for the industries that define the area today. More history is available online or at your public library.

Let the Games Begin

From the beginning, Indiana newspapers statewide called the Wolf Lake Park project a political football - quarterbacked originally by the Indiana Democrats and then skillfully played out by the Indiana Republicans. Indiana's Wolf Lake Park seven-year fund acquisition period ended in 1944, opening the debates for use of the accumulated fund of \$550,000. The use and distribution of these funds would be debated over the next three years.

It was unfortunate that at the time Lake County was divided in sentiment as to the desirability of Wolf Lake as a State Park and two rival projects within the borders of the county threatened the success of the undertaking. The Hammond-Whiting district wanted to divert the fund to a proposed park on Deep River in the eastern part of the Lake County and the other plan called for spending the money to set up a State Park on the Kankakee River in the south end of the county.

Newly elected Republican Governor Gates had a tough decision to make. In 1937, the state had originally designated the use of the funds only for a Wolf Lake Park project and if the Wolf Lake plan now was not feasible, the general assembly had to pass another law about the fund before it could be used for anything else.

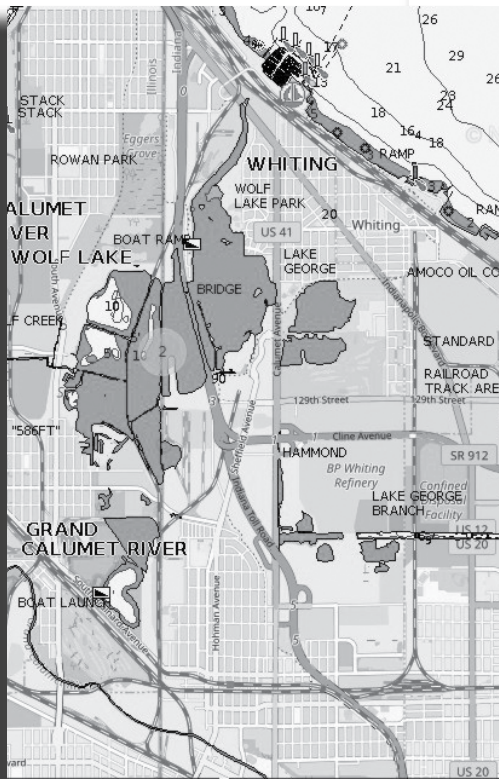
First, he initiated an inspection of the original site by the Indiana Conservation Department. Most of the property for Wolf Lake was located on the Illinois side, possibly eliminating the opportunity to charge an entrance fee to visitors, and the Indiana land was located within a municipality. The Conservation Department conceded that a deficiency of park and recreational facilities existed in or near the highly industrial Calumet District.

What would Governor Gates do with the funds?

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Wolf Lake, 2020

Historian's Corner

Influenza Pandemics By Newton County Historian Diana Elijah

Most interesting about pandemics are comparisons and similarities. An article by the CDC on the web about Spanish Flu (1918-1920), made me feel as if were reading yesterday's paper or listening to news. That pandemic killed 50,000,000 people worldwide; 675,000 in the U.S. Mortality was high among ages up to five years, 20-40 and over age 65. Death was caused by the lungs filling up and then choking to death on their own mucus. There were no vaccines, ventilators, or antibiotics for secondary infections from influenza, such as pneumonia.

The only interventions were quarantine, isolation, good personal hygiene, use of disinfectants and the limiting of public gatherings - which by the way, were not as organized as today's gathering guidelines for Covid-19.

Victims became ill and a few hours later they would die. During the Spanish Flu epidemic, the U.S. life span was reduced by 10 years. It swept the world via the world trade routes and shipping lanes. Does that sound familiar? Our society today has easy access to other parts of the world.

WWI (1917-1919) empowered the Spanish flu because of crowded barracks, shipment of troops, poor hygiene in the war zones and the return home of troops after injury or illness, such as the flu. Communities were very close-knit at the time and only a small majority travelled the state or worldwide. Thus, the influenza spread like the black death of the Bubonic Plaque during the Middle Ages - taking the lives of entire families.

At this time, the U.S. suffered a shortage of doctors, as many of them signed up to serve their country. President Wilson was rightly preoccupied by the war and did not seem too concerned with the outbreak - or perhaps just couldn't handle both crises. Medical professionals were called in to handle the outbreaks thank goodness.

That virus was H1N1 from Chinese origin as well, many of our flu epidemics have been caused by an Avian (bird) virus. These viruses constantly mutate - that is why vaccines change each year. Over the years, most of these viruses have also had origins in Asia.

In an article I read about a WWI Army camp on the outskirts of Louisville, KY that was infested with the Spanish Flu, city officials and camp officers worked feverishly closing public places such as theaters, bars, and churches. The mix of city population and the Army camp created a communicable disease disaster in 1920 for the area.

I was a senior in Nursing School in 1957 and our staff of instructors said it was

imperative we were vaccinated for the flu. It was a good plan as we had an outbreak of H1N1 creating a full hospital of extremely ill patients. The U.S. lost 70,000 people that fall and winter.

I did not find any family stories related to the Spanish Flu outbreak in our area, but it is known that life during that time was much harder - and people died from life's difficulties more so then than now. Many considered the Spanish Flu just another of life's hurdles.

Nursing Care facilities have always had high fatality rates when it comes to epidemics and outbreaks. Mostly because of the close living quarters. Years ago where I was a nurse, we would have overflow beds out in the hallways - never a good situation - but we did what we had to do to help the sick the best way we knew how.

People are concerned about the return of Covid-19 this fall and winter and in my opinion it probably will. Regular flu vaccines will be available in August/September - **go get vaccinated as soon as possible!** It will help build your immunity. I also suggest that you always keep masks and sanitizing wipes available.

Several friends I talked with while writing this article asked about Polio. We had a scary time in the 1940s-50s with several from Newton County contracting the disease. Most survived but had lifelong disabilities from polio. Yet today, there still isn't a cure - only a vaccination for polio.

Polio (1916-1955, with 57,628 reported cases and 3,145 deaths in the U. S., reached its peak in 1952. After the development of the polio vaccine, by 1962 the average number of cases dropped to 910. Today, the CDC reports that the U.S. has been polio free since 1979.

I have given you more to think about and I am personally "pandemic'd out". I could write about TB, Typhoid, Diphtheria, Measles, Smallpox, Hepatitis, Whooping Cough, but then we would all be in overload.

Stay safe and stay healthy!
Articles from 1918 local papers.

INFLUENZA SWEEPS COMMUNITY.
The Spanish Influenza is sweeping the country and many deaths result from the pneumonia which often follows it.
The physicians say for you to go to bed when it gets you and remain there until you recover.
The schools were closed for lack of attendance, as the influenza has spread more rapidly than anticipated and over two-thirds of the pupils are out on account of the disease.
The schools of Goodland, Morocco and Wadena have closed down for an indefinite period.

BROOK SCHOOLS FREE FROM INFLUENZA.

After a careful examination it was found that almost 90 per cent of the pupils of Brook schools had had the influenza. Of 327 pupils enrolled, all but 31 had the influenza.

The 4th. grade made a perfect score as every pupil in that grade had the disease.

Reports from all rooms is to the effect that no pupils are annoyed from the after effects, as there is practically no coughing.

DEATH TAKES HEAVY TOLL FROM BROOK AND VICINITY

SEVEN DEATHS HERE FROM INFLUENZA AND PNEUMONIA COMBINED. VERY FEW CASES NOW AND ALL ARE STEADILY IMPROVING.

Quarantine Notice.

All gatherings must be closed until the epidemic is over. Theatre will open the 19th in the evening. Churches and Sunday school open Sunday morning the 20th. School opens Monday Oct. 21st.
Ira W. Murphey.

President's Thoughts

By Kay Babcock

I remember a few years back several family members were talking about all the changes that our grandparents had seen in their lifetimes.

From horse drawn carriages and farm equipment to cars and tractors to shooting men into space and landing on the moon! They wrote letters by hand on paper and mailed them and now with computers, it is an email and immediate delivery. And they survived several major historical incidents.

And now we find ourselves in the COVID-19 pandemic. Are we managing it better than our grandparents and others did? Most were then living on a farm and were self-sufficient - able to feed their families from the land. Now we depend on trips to stores to purchase most everything we need. Businesses closing down have wreaked havoc on many people this time. Now we have learned to order many of our needs online. Will businesses survive, will jobs return? Will children who lost nearly half a year of school be able to catch up? So many questions that we may be years away from truly knowing the answers.

What have you done during the Shut Down - Shelter In time? Even the simplest things changed.

We have attended funeral visitations that have been far from the ordinary, church is attended in front of the computer (boy, would that have ever shocked our Grandparents!), meetings with friends have been cancelled, and large events have been called off or postponed. Doctor appointments cancelled or changed surgeries unless necessary were put off. The weather did not help our moods, sunshine and warmer weather would have been so wonderful.

I cleaned out several closets, the stuff that we save, the stuff that I thought I was saving for the boys, who no doubt don't want! I have read several books, did you? I even starting coloring again. I have a friend who has done many, many jigsaw puzzles. Many were sewing making masks for anyone who needed them. It has been a difficult time.

As we continue to live in this "historical" time, hopefully some are recording the events for the future. We will survive until the "new normal" arrives, and then make the best of whatever it is.

As things slowly open and we continue to error on the side of being safe, I think that "opening up" the Historical Society needs to be done slowly. As soon as the Commissioners open the public buildings, I feel the best and most safe way to do that, is to let members go to the Resource Center to work, if they chose, but not to open the building to the public until August. So, we will be back to whatever the normal will be, until then stay safe and be well.

During the winter period of 1916 each town had much in the news of sickness called Grippe or La grippe. (aka Spanish Flu). The following was poem appeared in a *Newton County Enterprise* edition about this sickness:

The Grippe

An ache in the back, and a pain in the head--That's the grippe!
 A choke in the throat, and a yearning for bed--That's the grippe!
 A river of heat, then a shiver of cold, a feeling of being three hundred years old,
 A willingness even to do as you're told--That's the grippe!
 An arrow of pain, now this is the place--now that--That's the grippe!
 A feeling of doubt as to where you are at--That's the grippe!
 A stupid sensation--of course, wholly new!
 A stupid depression--why should you feel blue?
 A doubt to whether this is you--That's the grippe!
 Strange visions at night that deprive you of rest--That's the grippe!
 A taste in your mouth and a weight on your chest--That's the grippe!
 A tired sensation that runs through your veins,
 A queer combination of aches and of pains,
 A rapid admission of absence of brains--That's the grippe!

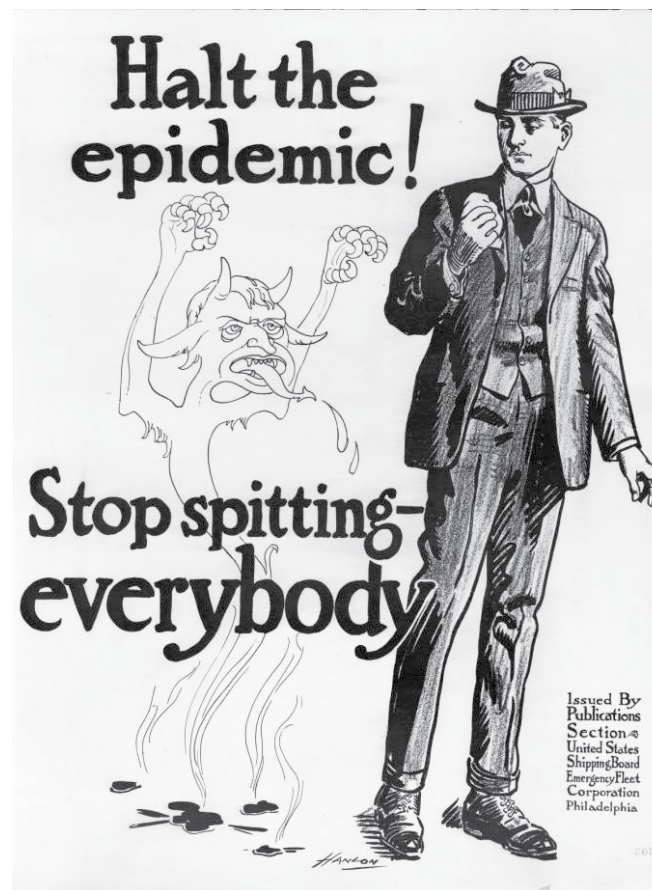
In 1918 children would skip rope to the rhyme (Crawford):

*I had a little bird,
 Its name was Enza.
 I opened the window,
 And in-flu-enza.*

Spanish Flu - Indiana Board of Health Poster

In 1918, Dr. John Hurty, Indiana's Secretary of the Board of Health, telephoned the local health officials in each city requesting a report. Hurty warned that the flu was "highly contagious," but stated that "quarantine is impractical," according to the *Indianapolis News*. Instead, he offered Hoosiers this advice:

"If all spitting would immediately cease, and if all coughers and sneezers would hold a cloth or



paper handkerchief over their noses and mouths when coughing or sneezing, then influenza and coughs and colds would almost disappear. We also must not forget to tone up our physical health, for even a few and weak microbes may find lodgment in low toned bodies. To gain high physical tone, get plenty of sleep in a well ventilated bedroom. Don't worry, don't fret, don't hurry, don't feast, don't hurry, don't fret. Look carefully after elimination. Eat only plain foods. Avoid riotous eating of flesh. Go slow on coffee and tea. Avoid alcohol in every form. Cut out all drugs and dopes . . . Frown on public spitters and those who cough and sneeze in public without taking all precautions."

Posters such as the one on the left were sent out statewide by the Board of Health in Indiana.

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At this point, the Izaak Walton Chapters and Conservation Clubs of Northwestern Indiana spearheaded by Representative Howard Hiestand (R), began a vigorous campaign for the Kankakee River as a logical spot for a State Park, and to transfer the Wolf Lake funds, amounting now to \$569,209.68, to the Kankakee River State Park and Forest project.

Far from Over

In the minds of many Gary and Hammond residents, the park project was far from dead after the Conservation Department's declaration. They considered seeking reassignment of the funds as state aid to a local recreation improvement project.

In January 1947, Representative Hiestand authored and introduced House Bill No. 64, which provided for the transfer of the funds from organizations in the four counties immediately adjacent to the projected park area towards the Kankakee River State Park and Forest project. He had the support from his own two counties (Newton/Jasper) and from the lower half of Lake County and all of Porter County, as well as those on the Illinois side. He also had the endorsement of the State Conservation Clubs and State and National Izaak Walton Leagues.

"The Kankakee River Park and Forest plan fits the Conservation Department's ideal of having a State Park within thirty-five miles of every resident of northwest Indiana." Hiestand stated to the press.

"Such a park would be a fisherman's paradise. Since the (Kankakee) channel was straightened, all the little elbows that were left would make marvelous breeding spots for fish, and (by using) small, relatively inexpensive dams, flood control would be in place.

"This bill would release \$400,000 of the fund for land acquisition. The conservation department would be granted power of eminent domain. The rest of the fund would be used for development, improvement, beautification, and operation of the park.

"A clause authorizing the conservation department to accept gifts and donations for the park and forest has been regarded as clearing the way for some degree of federal forestry aid." (Source: *Indianapolis Star* Jan 20, 1947.)

Let's Rally Boys

In February 1947, the Indiana House Ways and Means Committee settled the hotly contested Wolf Lake State Park question at a public hearing. They were considering two measures. (1) Hiestand's bill which had the backing of the administration and (2) the Hunter bill, presented by Clyde Hunter of Gary authorizing the Conservation Department to keep the Wolf Lake fund intact and

proceed with plans to acquire the Wolf Lake area within the city limits of Hammond. The Calumet citizenry supported the Hunter bill, even though the Conservation Department had declared the area unfit for park purposes.

Hunter put up a good fight, but the Ways and Means Committee majority report recommended passage of a House Bill that would transfer the fund, collected by taxation for the Wolf Lake Park, to the Kankakee River site. The recommendations were adopted by voice vote.

On March 6, 1947, the *Hammond Times* reported "The Senate today settled the age-old Wolf Lake Park issue by passage of two compromise bills. The measure splits equally the \$528,000 originally collected for the Wolf Lake park in Hammond between that project and the Kankakee River State Park and Forest plan. "The Wolf Lake allotment of \$264,000 passed 38 to 4 and the Kankakee measure was adopted unanimously. Both bills went to the house where concurrence on the Senate compromise between the two proposals seems certain." (Source: *Indianapolis Star*, Feb 5 and 19, 1947.)

Fat Lady Sings

March 13, 1947, newspapers reported: "Both measures were passed by the 85th General Assembly after a last-minute compromise between Lake and Newton County forces. That compromise - a bill would be introduced to provide a 1.5 mill tax earmarked for forestry, and that 1 mill should be used for a period of seven years for forestry on the Kankakee, adding approximately \$54,000 per year for a seven year period to the Kankakee fund. Ultimately, the compromise agreement provided more funds for the Kankakee than to have secured the entire Wolf Lake fund, and by such a compromise all factions in Northwestern Indiana are happy, as now there will be two recreational parks instead of one."

It would be the conservationists, sportsmen/women and people in general who loved the outdoors that were declared the winners in the end.

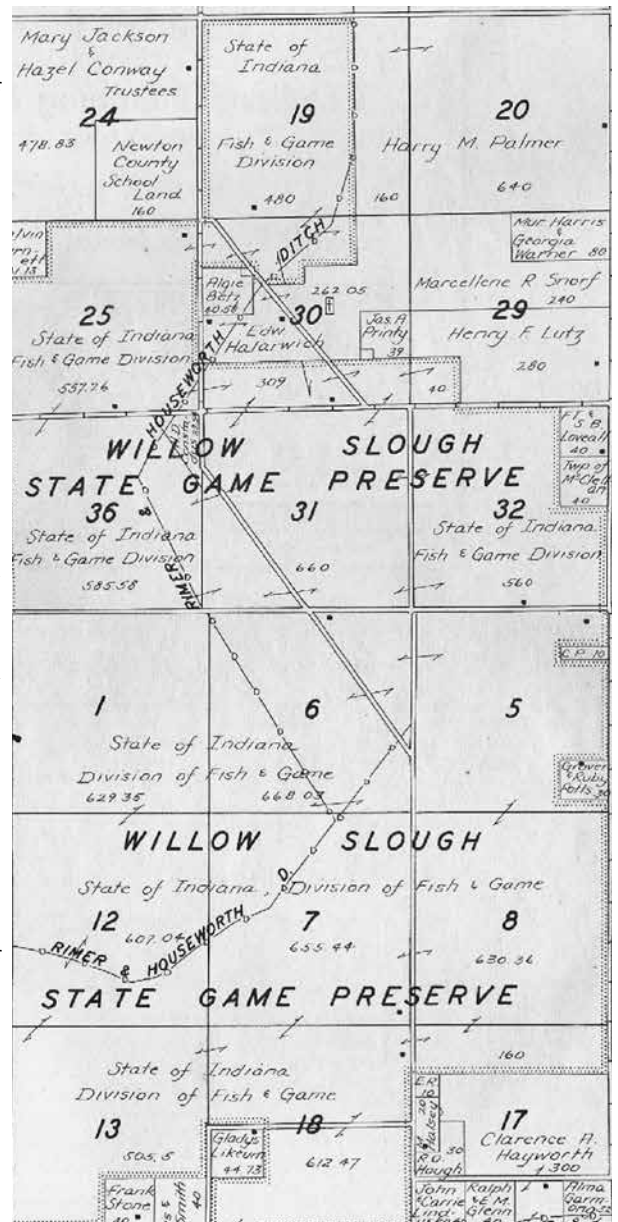
Parks Dedications, 1952

August 3, 1952

The day finally arrived for the opening dedication of the new Kankakee River State Park

in Lake Township. Both current Governor Schricker and his predecessor, Governor Gates spoke during the ceremonies. They were both awarded certificates of merit from the Wabash, Indiana Division of the Izaak Walton League of America for their support of the project. Also honored was Murray D. Baker who donated (sold for \$1) nearly 1000 acres of his land along the Kankakee River that launched the park project. Howard Hiestand was also presented a plaque by the conservation clubs for his efforts and work on the project.

More than 3700 witnessed the dedication of Indiana's 18th State Park. A casting contest opened the festivities and a softball game was played at noon. A buffet luncheon that was hosted by the Arbuckle family at



Partial Beaver Township 1958 Newton County Plat showing Willow Slough lands.

their Lake Village home prior to the dedication included most of the dignitaries involved in the park project.

September 21, 1952

The "Forest" part of the Kankakee River State Park and Forest would become known as the Willow Slough State Preserve, encompassing 7900 acres in Beaver and McClellan Townships. Work began on April 3, 1951, on the dam built on the Riner-Houseworth ditch creating a 1200-acre lake. The remaining lands would be managed as a combination refuge and public hunting area with the lake stocked with smallmouth bass, crappie, bluegill, sunfish, channel catfish and other minor species.

Over 2200 people attended the dedication ceremonies. Speeches were made and accolades handed out to those involved in the creation of the area. The lake was officially named after local attorney, J. C. Murphey, and opened for fishing on June 16, 1953.

Land Acquisitions - Lake Township

Known today as the LaSalle Fish and Wildlife Area, acreage has grown to 3797 acres. Entirely in Lake Township, it encompasses Range 10: Sections 1, 12 (partial). Range 9: Sections 6, 5, and partial of Sections 4, 8 and 9. See map at bottom of page.

Murray Baker

Lands were gifted from Newton County farm owner and Peoria, Illinois industrialist Murray Baker initially in 1947 in Lake Township for the Kankakee River State Park. Mr. Baker was the founder of the Caterpillar Corporation and owned Murray Baker farmland in Lake Township. His lands were considered the nucleus of the park with his original gift of



800-900 acres. Mr. Baker loved to duck hunt, so perhaps that was his connection to these lands in Newton County.

In 1963, an additional 1280 acres were purchased from Mr. Baker. It was at this time that the name changed to the LaSalle Fish and Wildlife Area.

Dr. and Mrs. Ray S. Churchill

It is unknown how Dr. Ray Churchill became associated with Newton County, but in 1947, the *Newton County Enterprise* reported in April, 1947: "Dr. Ray Stephen and Elsie Churchill of Chicago acquired the John Spindler lands (960 +/-) in Lake Township - lands that had been in the Spindler family for 56 years." They would eventually also purchase lands to the east of the Spindler farm that remains in the Churchill family today.

In 1948 the Churchills sold a 578-acre tract of their land located just north of Lake Village to the State of Indiana Conservation Department which was part of the Kankakee River State Park and Forest acquisitions. This tract provided a strip of land four miles long and about half-mile in width along the south side of the Kankakee between U.S. 41 and the Illinois line. Ray was an optometrist in Chicago, Illinois.

Land Acquisitions

Beaver and McClellan Townships

Known today as the Willow Slough Fish and Game Area acreage has grown to 9,956 acres located in Beaver Township, Range 10: Sections 1, 12, and 13 (partial) and in Range 9: Sections 19 (partial), 18, 17 (partial), 7, 8, 6, 5, 31 and 32. In McClellan Township, Range 10: Sections 36, 25 (partial) and Range 9: Sections 31, 32 (partial) and 30, 29 (partial) 20, 19. See map on page 4.

Early Landowners

The history of Beaver Lake tells us that Lemuel Milk owned most of these lands mentioned above until his death in 1903. The 1904 Newton County map indicates

Malkum Hubly owned most of them in Beaver Township. Charles Jamison, John Clark, Hubly and Wright the lands in McClellan. Land Transfer books indicate that sometime after 1904 until 1942 John Lawler and William Raff acquired these lands. In 1942 they transferred the lands to the Orton Land and Cattle Ranch. In 1948 the Orton Company sold to the State of Indiana and Everett Madison. In 1948, Madison sold part of his lands to the State of Indiana. The Orton and Madison acquisitions by the State of Indiana provided the acreage for Willow Slough.

Mr. Madison was the grandfather of Merlin Karlock who would eventually inherit Madison's Newton County landholdings, some of which are today owned by The Nature Conservancy.

Everett and Anna (Larsen) Madison

"State and Federal officials announced joint plans to acquire nearly 4,000 acres of old Kankakee swamp northwest of Morocco. The new State Park, the 16th in the system, (1948), is expected under long-range plans to include 10,000 acres, according to John H. Nigh, Director of the Department of Conservation. Part of the area will be used as a State Park, part as a forest and the remainder will be a game preserve.

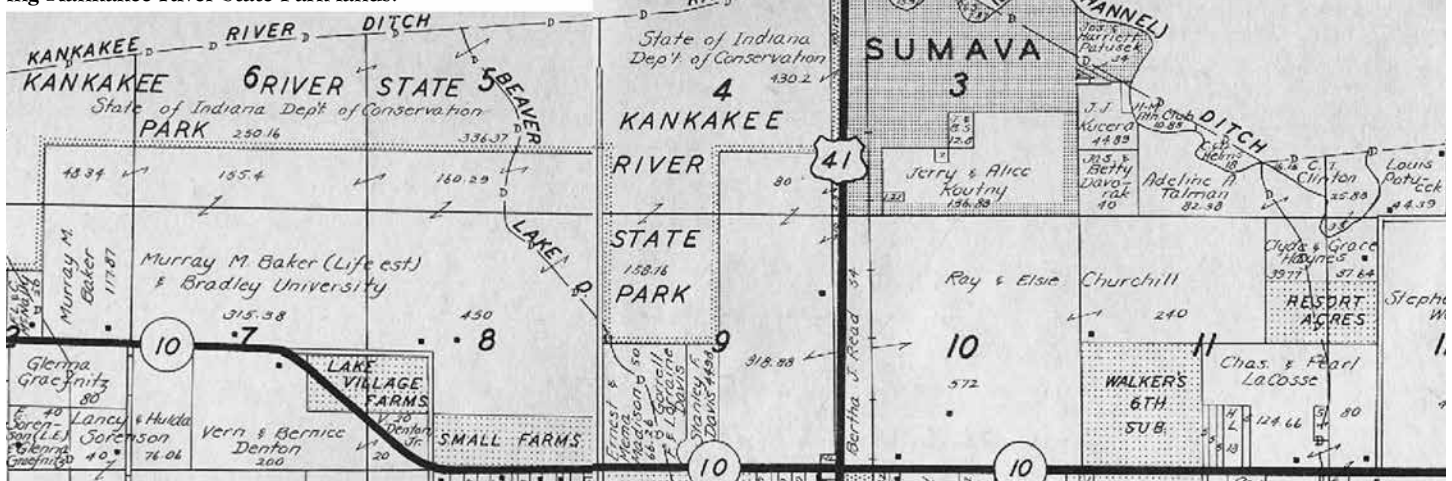
"The first move in the project will be the purchase of 3,767 acres from Everett and Anna Madison of near Momence, Illinois. The figure involved in the transaction is understood to be \$128,913.00, with the federal government paying nearly three-fourths of that amount under the Pittman-Robertson program.

"An option on the land has been held by the Conservation Department for some time. It has an agreement of \$39 per acre. Eventually the park will be opened for a large public hunting area for waterfowl and for fishing.

"Work on developing the new park is

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Partial Lake Township 1958 Newton County Plat showing Kankakee River State Park lands.



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expected to start after the State has acquired all necessary land. The development will include a dam across the Riner-Houseworth ditch, forming a 2500-acre lake." (Source: *Indianapolis News*, August 21, 1948).

Orton Land and Cattle Company

While researching newspapers.com, I came across an article from *The Daily Standard* from Sikeston, Missouri dated April 25, 1948. It related that Caleb Smith, a local realtor there had sold 3840 acres of land near Morocco, Indiana, for the Orton Land and Cattle Company to Everett Madison of Illinois. Real estate transfers published in the *Brook Reporter* on December 2, 1948 show that Orton sold land to the State of Indiana. Those lands were in McClellan, Range 9, Parts of Sections 1 and 32; in Beaver, Range 9, Sections 5, 6, 7, 8, 17, 18, and 9. Total of \$146,537.04.

Howard Hiestand (1891-1963)

Howard Hiestand was born on a farm near Goodland to Elmore and Editha Hiestand. He had four sisters, Dora, Goldie, Edith, and Mary and three brothers, Robert, Edward and Joseph. He left the farm at the age of 19 and moved to Florida where he spent one year as the manager of a dining room, settling back in Kentland in August of 1919 to be an interior decorator. After four years, he began to study law with his brother, Robert Hiestand. They formed a partnership and engaged in the practice of law and dealt in insurance and real estate.



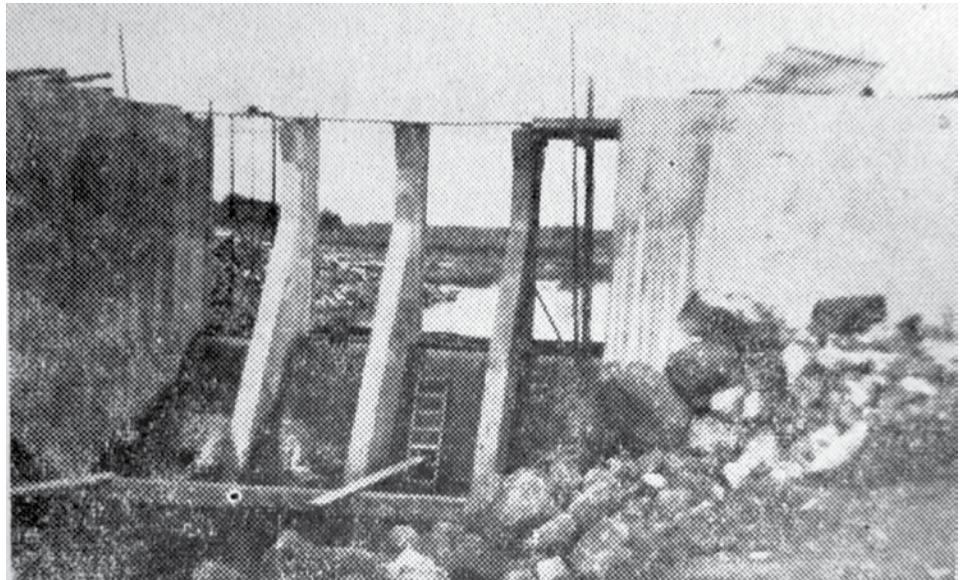
Howard Hiestand

In 1914 he married Mary Whiteaker (d.1960) and later Ruby Wedgebury. He made his home in Kentland. He was elected as Joint Representative from Jasper and Newton Counties in 1936 and served in that capacity from 1937-1948. In 1949, he was reappointed to the Indiana State Conservation Committee and served as the National President of the National Izaak Walton League from 1944-1948. He was active in Republican politics throughout his life. Source: *Newton County Enterprise People at Work Series*, #21.

Find Newton County family and local research materials on line at:
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Newton County photo and memory pages for towns and schools there too. Interact and contribute to these social networks!



This is a view of the dam which was constructed in the Riner-Houseworth ditch in McClellan township to cause water to back up for the Willow Slough lake. It is the second largest artificial lake in the State. The lake will be State controlled and stocked for fishing but used at present for spawning grounds for two years. The picture was taken just before the lake was flooded. It now has a depth of about 8 feet. *Newton County Enterprise*, 1952.



A view of part of the LaSalle Fish and Wildlife Area, Lake Village.



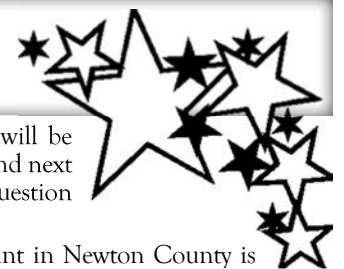
A view of J. C. Murphey Lake, at Willow Slough Fish and Game Area, Morocco.

Do You Know?

By Janet Miller - Answers on page 15

Newton County has ten townships and in this issue will be questions about five of the townships in alphabetical order and next issue will contain the remainder. If you get your township question correct consider yourself receiving a gold star!

1. Beaver Township: According to history the highest point in Newton County is located in Beaver Township. Do you know where this point is located?
2. Colfax Township: Colfax Township is the only township in Newton County without a town. However, it does boast of having had the largest Indian campsite in Newton County. Do you know where this camp was located?
3. Grant Township: The town of Goodland was formed in 1861. The name Goodland was chosen because of the good land and beautiful prairie surrounding the area. However, there is another story about how Goodland was named. Do you know this story?
4. Iroquois Township: The town of Brook had Newton County's first post office. However, it was not located in the current town of Brook. Where was the first area called Brook?
5. Jackson Township: Two miles north and a little west of Mt. Ayr was a mile long road named after an industry that was located there. Can you name that road?



Conservation Committee Inspects Cameron Estate *Brook Reporter, 1947*

Note: Cameron's estate is located in northern Lincoln Township.

The Advisory Board of the Kankakee River State Park and Forest, together with officers of the Indiana State Conservation Department and others interested in this project met Saturday morning at the estate of Allan Cameron, of the Continental Can Company, on the Chicago Range Road for an all-day meeting and study of the many things accomplished by Mr. Cameron toward conservation and protection of wildlife.

Those attending beside the host and hostess were B. A. Kennedy, Assistant Director of the Department of Conservation and chairman of the Kankakee River State Park and Forest project, Wabash; K. R. Congil, Anderson; Donald R. Hughes, H. P. Cunningham, William B. Barns, and Ralph F. Wilson, Indianapolis; Ross Masey, Fountain City; Walter M. Kelsey, Pulaski County Game Warden, Monterey; J. C. Brown, Banker, Otto Fifield, former Secretary of State, Lloyd Cutler, Lake County Agent, and Elwood Fifield, of Crown

Point; J. Bloom and Thomas G. Mackenzie, of Gary; Ivar Henning, South Bend; L. V. Miller, Frankfort; Howard R. Hiestand, State Representative, Ira Dixon, business man, and R. L. Zell, Newton County Agent at Kentland; and Leo R. Highet, editor and publisher of the *Morocco Courier*.

The group arrived at the estate at 10:00, when they were welcomed by their host and hostess, Mr. and Mrs. Allan Cameron.

After a lunch at eleven 11:00, the party donned old clothes, raincoats, hunting coats, slickers, caps of all kinds, boots and rubbers and in spite of the drizzling rain, boarded boats with outboard motors and proceeded along the canals and ditches to the marshes along the river.

Enthusiasm ran high when flock after flock of ducks were flushed and they took to the air in clouds. It was estimated that over 5,000 ducks of all kinds were seen.

Many places were noted where the beavers had been at work, and a number of beaver houses were encountered.

Mr. Cameron explained how the water levels were maintained by means of an elaborate set of dams and gates and in some places by means of pumping water.

Some of the marsh is drained during the late spring and, when possible, cultivated. Then it is flooded again in the fall in readiness for the return of wild fowl. Some of the marsh, of course, is flooded continuously.

Several stops were made for better observation and study and, in spite of the cold and damp weather, no one was in a hurry to return.

The group regathered at the house at 4:00 where many matters were discussed. Reports showed that everything was moving along smoothly and the perfect cooperation among the members and among the various departments spoke volumes for the ultimate success of the whole project. At 5:30 the assembly sat down to a most delicious duck dinner with all the trimmings, presided over by the most congenial host and hostess, in genuine old-fashioned southern hospitality.

The Kenoyer Mink Ranch in Brook

These photos seen here were published in the *Newton County Enterprise* in April 1952 showing some of the house of 276 female minks that would someday be used to make coats for those who can afford them. It is the Kenoyer mink ranch at the east edge of Brook, which is operated by Ernest Kenoyer, Noah and Joe Brown. They also have 57 males making 333 of the hungry mouths to feed daily, which has been a full-time job for the three men. They enjoy their work but are not happy when Mr. and Mrs. Mink take a liking to one of their fingers. Leather mittens are always worn by the men while handling the animals.

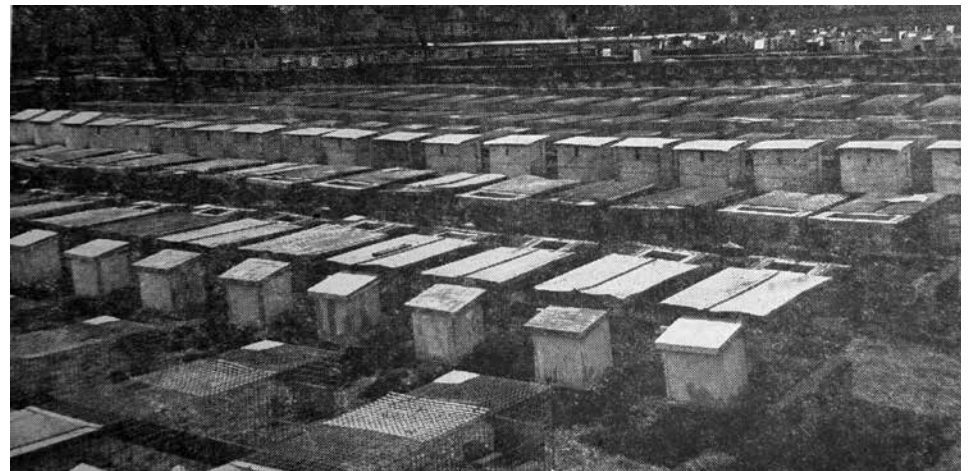
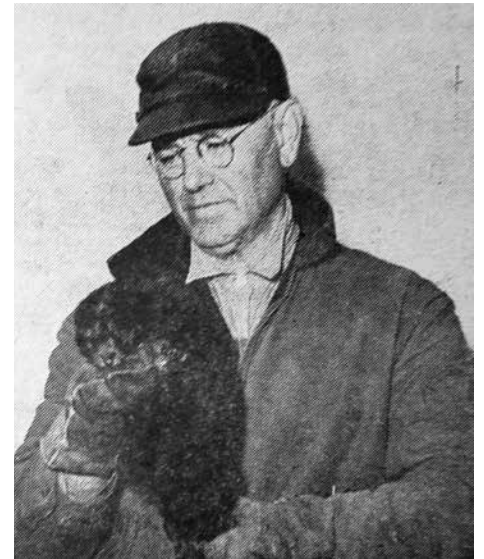
March is the mating season and they have but one brood each year. The young will be born in May or 50 days and a litter runs from two to four and will about average three the men said. Like most other animals the male is larger and is good for breeding purposes for an indefinite period. While the females are only useful for four years and the pelt goes into a coat.

They eat meat and cereal the latter of which is obtained from a commercial course. It takes 75 pelts to make an average size coat and 80 pelts for the larger ones. They sell at the ranch from \$30 to \$52 and averaged \$30.00 each last year. However, some males are worth as much as \$250.00 each. All mink are raised at the ranch after breeding stock of four females were obtained about five years ago. The pelts are always sold in late November when the fur is at its peak and the skin is the toughest.

The cages (pictured below) are of heavy wire netting placed some 24 inches above the ground with a wooden nest box to each cage. When minks are molested, they throw out an unpleasant odor like a skunk although, it does not remain on your clothing after the air strikes it. Mr. Kenoyer and the Brown boys are glad to show you their ranch and would even be glad to sell you a few pelts.

The man you see (right) is Ernest Kenoyer holding one of his prize black species. They also have browns, grays and blues all developed by crossbreeding.

Update: Ernest's son Richard, his wife Tona and baby son Ronnie moved to Brook in 1957 to help out with the busy ranch. The ranch was in business about 15 years and closed in 1963.



Salt: Father Snoich

by Jeff Manes - Originally published in 2007

"Daddy died a miner and grandpa he did too, I'll bet this coal will kill me before my working days are through ... There's fire in our hearts and fire in our soul but their ain't gonna be no fire in the hole ..."
Hazel Dickens

A small Catholic church stands at Indiana 10 and U. S. 41 in Lake Village. When I was a boy, the pastor at St. Augusta was the Rev. Scholl. There never has been a Betty Crocker, but there was a Dr. Scholl. The pastor was his cousin.

The Rev. Stephen Snoich, 78, has been the pastor at St. Augusta since 2004. He was born and raised in Shenandoah, PA, during the Great Depression.

"Shenandoah was an anthracite coal mining town," Snoich began, "Anthracite is a hard coal; it burns very hot - it has a blue flame to it. You use soft coal in the steel mill; you'll get an orange or yellow flame from soft coal."

Your family?

My grandfathers on both sides of the family were killed in the mines. One was a Lithuanian immigrant, the other migrated here from the Ukraine. My dad started the mines at the age of 9. He died from black lung (disease). It's a very dangerous job. There were some miners killed just recently out in Utah - cave in. They couldn't locate them.

"My mother was a seamstress; she made all of my trousers. She worked in a factory where they made hunting shirts - those plaid shirts."

Flannel shirts like lumber jacks wear?

"Yes, they made a lot of those shirts way back. They were paid by the dozen. Some ladies sewed the arms on, some shoulders, collars - there were always extra pieces left over. Mother would go from pile to pile, and that's how I got my shirts. They would have thrown away the scrap pieces. She did the same for my sisters' dresses. Both my sisters went on to be nurses. One of them, she's older than me, is still living in the same homestead built in 1885."

Was it mostly Eastern Europeans living in Shenandoah during the '30s and '40s?

"We had just about everything: Slovaks, Polish, Lithuanian, German, Irish, Little Italy. During the boom time, we had about 30,000 people. Today there are less than 4,000."

Did you work in the mines?

"No; I started working at age 10 as a delivery boy for a butcher shop. Then, the owner's son was called into the service during World War II.

"I was the only other employee; I was cutting meat by the time I was 12. I could barely fit a quarter round of beef up to the block, but I did.

"After I graduated from high school, I went to college for one year in Philadelphia, a liberal arts course.

"I had a chance to stay with a widow and her family. She rented to students for extra money. I eventually moved on and took a carpentry apprenticeship in Philadelphia. I became a journeyman carpenter. I soon was running many jobs, although only in my 20s."

Were you salaried?

"Oh no; I paid my union dues. When I started in the trade, we wore full-bib overalls with a nail apron in the front. But you didn't get your own nails, even if you were working right next to the barrel. You could put a laborer out of a job that way.

"We had a bad winter, and they said to take some time off from work. I visited an uncle and his family who lived in Kentucky. I also visited a Trappist monastery that was close by. They were a contemplative monastery; they're vegetarians and a little more strict than what I'm part of now.

"They had some construction going on. Those brothers were up on a scaffold laughing, joking, and talking I thought to myself, 'They're doing the same work I do, but look how much fun they're having.'

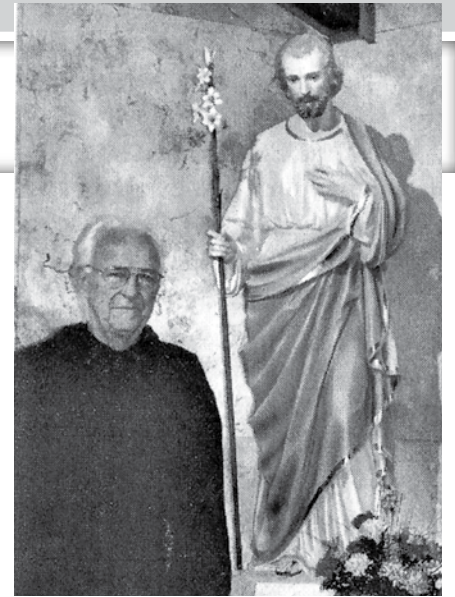
"One thing led to another, and my uncle wrote to one of the priests at St. Meinrad, a Benedictine monastery and seminary in southern Indiana. I was invited to visit them in 1955; they needed somebody with a construction background. Shall we say they laid the red carpet out for me?

"I joined the community as a novice. I learned the Benedictine way of life. Almost immediately, they sent me to the carpenter shop. I was given the job of making 50 oak tables for a group of sisters.

"Once I finished that task, the abbot called me into the office. He said, 'Our water has been condemned and, if we don't build a filter plant, we are going to have to send our entire student body home. Can you build it?' I said, 'Well, if I had a blueprint.'

"The abbot gave me one piece of paper; it was merely a floorplan sketch. I had no skilled labor for help. My crew consisted of men who did not know the difference between a hammer and a hatchete. We built the filter plant.

"I also built a guest house. Then, I was sent to California to build another guest house.



Father Snoich, 2007.

"When I finished that up in 1965, I asked to go into the seminary. It was then that I was relieved of my maintenance responsibilities."

Let's back up a bit. What does OSB stand for?

"Order of St. Benedict. You make your vows as a Benedictine monk. Some monks remain brothers for the rest of their lives; some go on for ordination."

"Once I'd obtained master's degree, I was given many assignments at St. Meinrad and was eventually assigned to St. Benedict's in Evansville as an associate pastor for 17 years ... to '92. Today, it is a cathedral.

"I was reassigned as a chaplain to a community of Benedictine sisters in Ferdinand - the Convent of the Immaculate Conception. I was there for 12 years. I came up here in 2004."

I hear you have an artistic side.

"I love to carve wood and etch glass. I've done some stained-glass work, as a hobby.

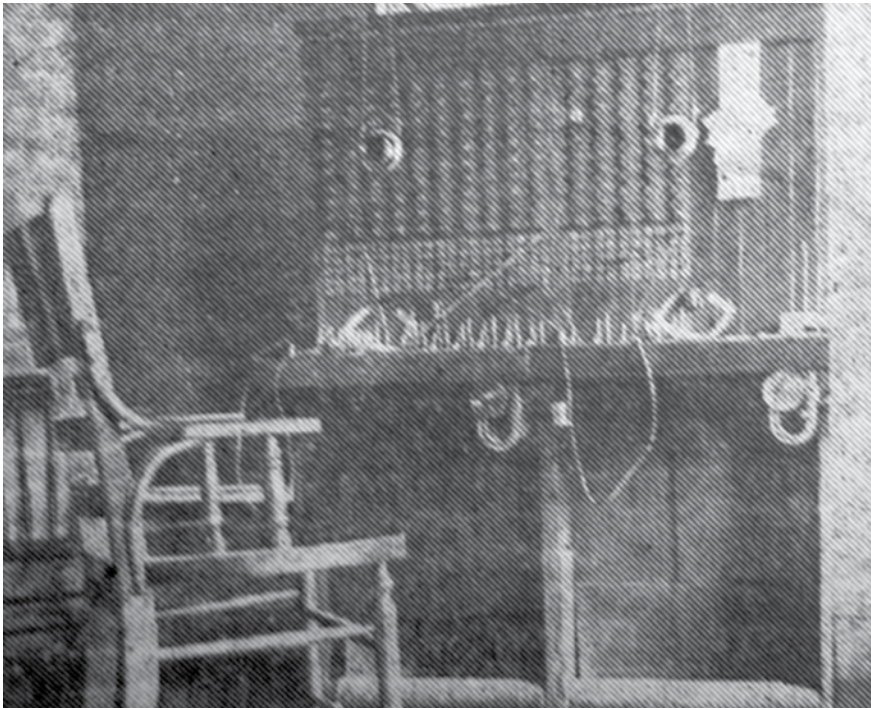
"When I was about to leave St. Benedict, the Men's Club wanted to give me something I could remember them by. They bought me a very power drill - 4,000 rpms. It is so fast you can drill holes in an egg without damaging the shell. It was designed by a dentist. I set up a little shop in the back of the monastery and started carving eggs."

How many parishioners do you have here?

"About 400 souls."

Father Snoich told me that he has always believed in preventive maintenance, that he likes to catch a problem before it becomes too serious. He also told me he brought his tools to Lake Village.

Appropriately, for his photograph, Snoich stood next to the patron saint of works - St. Joseph. Just to their right was yet another former carpenter, nailed to a cross.



Kentland's Telephone Exchange, 1899 The Home Telephone Company

Newton County Enterprise, February, 1950

This is the way the first Kentland telephone exchange looked in 1899. It was known as the Home Telephone company and had 50 subscribers. The board was made for 100 and was located over what is now Bair's Food store in the McCray building. The late W. T. McCray was the entire owner and operated the company until he sold it to T. H. Dixon due to poor health. Miss Ada McCain was one of the first operators and Chancey Castle was at the board at night. This early telephone exchange is quite a contrast to the modern one in use by the United Telephone Company. Old type water filled batteries were used to electrify the lines. The picture was taken on June 5, 1899 and is the property of Mrs. W. T. McCray, wife of the company's founder.



Book Review: *Fishing With Flip-flops*

By Cathy Schoon

Submitted by Beth Bassett

I would like to offer up a delightful book written by Cathy Schoon entitled "Fishing with Flip-flops", a collection of the most memorable, often time humorous stories of growing up as street kids in the small Indiana town of Lowell, Indiana.

"Living behind their parents' florist shop, five siblings survive by wit, pure luck and each other. When they move to a little cottage on the Wildwood Bayou of the Kankakee River, the family finds out that there are more characters out in the world than they ever dreamed."

Cathy prefaces her book: "I grew up on the streets. As harsh as that may sound, I do need to explain. I grew up on the streets of a small town in Indiana, during a time when free-range children were the norm." Today, she and her siblings continue to gather for a "siblings week," and it was at one of these gatherings that they all agreed that they needed to write down all the stories they recant each time they were together. She was the chosen one to take on this task, hence her book.

Sound familiar? Yes, all of us have great, and perhaps not so great family and childhood memories and experiences that deserve to be recorded for the ages - but how many of us accomplish this goal? Cathy paints a vivid picture of the background on which her memories are painted - downtown Lowell, the Kankakee River, Shelby and visiting her Memaw in Rensselaer, Indiana.

One of my favorite excerpts tells the tale of Cathy and her baby brother Bobby sneaking out a bank deposit slip from her mother's

floral shop; Bobby grabbing the Monopoly money and then "filling out the deposit slip with as many zeros as would fit." With their envelope with "cash" inside they placed it in the bank's night deposit box - fully expecting to make a withdrawal the next day and "do the obvious thing: buy candy." Ultimately, the bank calls their Mom and relates the story and another life lesson was in the file.

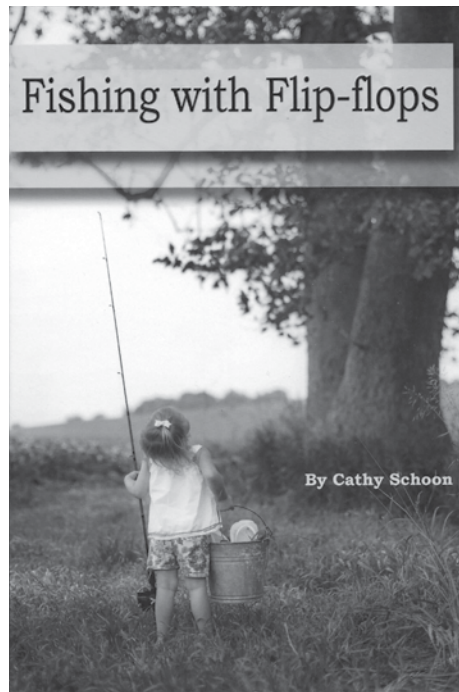
Places and characters include her second cousin Jigger Sirois, a local racing legend; tales of the residents of Wildwood Bayou; worm farming; night fishing with her Dad on the Kankakee; and a vivid picture of the business located along Commercial Avenue in Lowell, as well as the "crick" that ran through the town. And so much more.

About the Author

Cathy (Regnier) Schoon grew up in Lowell, Indiana. She along with her husband now reside in northeast Indiana. They have three sons, daughters in law, and ten grandchildren. She is a retired photographer and preschool teacher. Her hobbies include teaching her weekly art class to elementary students, reading, and traveling.

Her parents were George and Georgia (Fate) Regnier, Cathy being their first-born daughter. She dedicated the book to her siblings, Tom, Jane, Bonnie and Bob.

You can pick up a copy of "Fishing with Flip-flops" through Amazon or check with your public library. Because of its easy-flowing storyline, it is a quick read and one that you just can't put down. - Beth Bassett



Key Individuals Involved in the History of the Beaver Lakebed Lands

By Beth Bassett

There were many entities as well as stories about the disappearance and handling of Beaver Lake and the surrounding acreage that began in 1852. However, Professor Michael Dobbertstein's *You Tube* presentation entitled "Whatever Happened to Beaver Lake," which made its debut in March online instead of in person, brought to light the individuals that were key to the demise of the Lake and the dispensing of the lands. I will not go into details regarding his presentation as we hope to present it in person later this fall.

I found Dobbertstein's revelations regarding the individuals fascinating and began to delve into the history of these key people who changed the landscape of Newton County forever with the stroke a few pens.

The enacting of the Indiana Swamp-land Act of 1850 initiated the draining of the swamplands in northwest Indiana. This put in motion Michael Bright, a prosperous Madison, Indiana lawyer along with a cast of lawyers, judges, land commissioners, and settlers of the Beaver Lake Lands into writing pages of Newton County history. Enter stage right are the profiteers and land speculators with an abundance of change hanging around in their suit pockets. Were they aware of Bright's scheme, or were they just smart businessmen capitalizing on a good deal? All

of this was played out in the pages of newspapers across Indiana - leaving a paper trail for future investigation. It is thanks to Professor Dobbertstein that this trail can be reviewed. Online searches via ancestry and google provided photos and family information that provided more insight to these individuals.

According to Dobbertstein's report, Michael Bright began his land schemes circa 1853. He and others owned land around the shoreline of Beaver Lake. He would buy-out the other shoreline landowners, so that by 1857 he had in his possession all the lands surrounding the lake. Next, he proceeded to claim the lakebed (land under the waters of Beaver Lake), as his lands through riparian rights.

Bright was fully aware that the lake would eventually be completely drained - making it a highly valued agricultural asset in the not so distant future. In his mind if he could sell the lands before it was drained, he would profit on free and clear land, as he had not paid a dime for the lakebed lands - amounting to over 17,000 acres.

Dobbertstein's report details Bright's scheme to profit from sale of the Beaver Lakebed lands by first legitimizing his claim to the lakebed through careful plotting and planning via the court systems. Then strengthening the claim by selling part of the lakebed lands to the State of Indiana. In the end, Bright would profit \$20,000 between 1861-1871 on the sale of these lands.

A Few Characters

Michael and Jesse Bright, brothers and two powerful men in the State of Indiana during their time. Their involvement with the government may have opened their eyes to available lands in Northwest Indiana.

Jesse David Bright, (1812-1875), Democrat, was the ninth Lieutenant Governor of Indiana and a U.S. Senator from Indiana who served as President pro tempore of the Senate on three separate occasions. He was first elected to the Senate in 1844, reelected in 1850 and 1856, serving from 1845-1862. One of his enemies was Senator Stephen A. Douglas of Illinois who voted against keeping Bright in the Senate after Bright acknowledged Jefferson Davis as President of the Confederate States. Bright also facilitated the sale of arms to the Confederacy, yet another reason for his expulsion from

the Senate. He was also the only Senator from the Northern States to be expelled from being a Confederate sympathizer - as a leading copperhead he opposed the Civil War. After losing everything in Indiana, he moved to Kentucky where he was a member of the Kentucky House of Representatives from 1867-1871. He died in Baltimore, Maryland in 1875. I do not know if Jesse had any ties to the Beaver Lake schemes, but his colorful life surely intersected with Michael - maintaining a close relationship through their lifetimes.

Michael Graham Bright was born in Norwich, New York on January 16, 1803 and first came to Indiana with his father in 1821, but returned to New York to complete his college courses, after



Jesse Bright

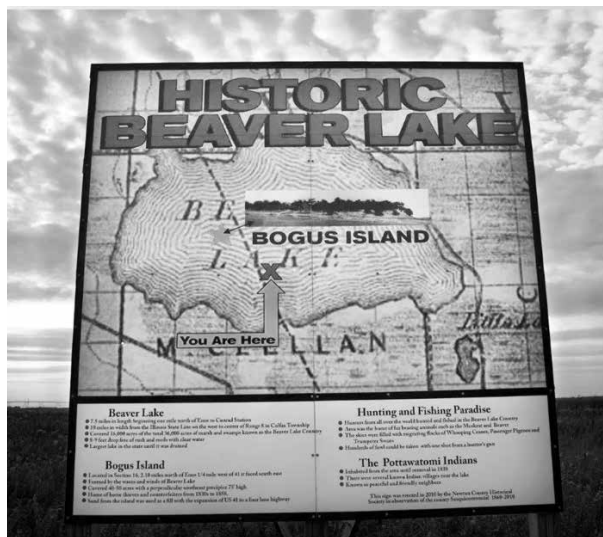
which he moved to Madison, Indiana, where he began his practice of law. He was a son of David Grant and Rachael Bright. According to a public family tree on ancestry.com, he had twelve siblings. In 1829 he married Elizabeth "Betsy" Brooke Steele. They had twelve children, six of whom were living upon his death in 1881. The 1870 census indicates that he and his family were living in Indianapolis at that time and that he had retired as a lawyer.

Indiana Census records from 1860-1880 track the success of Bright's business ventures through his net worth. In 1850: \$50,000, 2020 value \$1,643,519.00; 1860: \$140,000, 2020 value \$4,324,633.00; 1870: \$210,000 2020 value \$4,110,052.00. So, the \$20,000 (\$391,433.59 today) that he acquired from the sale of the Beaver Lakebed lands (1861-1871) improved his bottom line a bit.

His obituary stated that sixteen years prior to his death in 1881 (1865 at the age of 62), he had been stricken with paralysis in New York City and since that time had been an almost helpless invalid. It may also explain why Amizi Condit, after all those years of initially dealing with Bright, would come back to defend the settlers of Beaver Lake and demand that the government survey the Beaver Lake lands and clarify their land ownership once and for all. Bright died at the age of 78, a very wealthy man. No action was taken against his estate when the Indiana Supreme Court in 1889 declared Bright's title to the Beaver Lakebed lands to be invalid.

Amizi B. Condit

The first documented trace of Amizi



This sign, erected along U.S. 41 in 2010 by our society, indicates the location of Beaver Lake on the TNC lands today. Preview Professor Dobbertstein's presentation "Whatever Happened To Beaver Lake" by pasting this link in your browser: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=M94tLRopXs4&feature=youtu.be>. If you need a bit more background on Michael Bright's plot of Beaver Lake, please visit our website: www.ingenweb.org/innewton and search through the index of past issues, such as Winter 2008 of *The Newcomer* for articles and photographs.



Left, Michael Bright and Betsy (Brook Steele) Bright, wife of Michael Bright.

Condit in Newton (then Jasper) County was as the Swampland Engineer for Northern Indiana in the 1850s. He was sent here to survey and estimate the cost of digging a ditch to drain the swamp areas in the county. At that time, he along with then State Auditor John Dunn purchased nineteen miles of the fractional lands along the shoreline of Beaver Lake and then sold them to Bright. Please refer to the additional article printed here for his history of the ditch created to drain the swamplands in the Beaver Lake lands and his view of Bright's title to the Beaver Lakebed.

Condit and his family appear in the Census of Beaver Township in 1860 living next to John Smart north of Morocco. His occupation was listed as a farmer, with real estate values of \$1,050. The Civil War would call him to the south where he worked for the railroad and helped organize railway hospitals in two southern cities. After the war he published a newspaper and in 1865 was elected to the U.S. House of Representatives from Alabama. In 1867 he returned to Indianapolis and worked for the railroad company that carried the southern Indiana coal to the Chicago districts.

Three years prior to his death in 1873, he was residing in Chicago where he organized the famous Beaver Lake expeditions to justify the land rights of the Beaver Lakebed lands, brought to light in Dobberstein's presentation. We may never know what inspired Condit to lead the groups and squat on the lands then "owned" by Algie Dean and Lemuel Milk - but his protests at that time may have led to the ultimate decision to offer the lands back to the original occupants in 1889. Would this had even occurred if Condit had not set his expedition in motion in 1870? We do not know.

A visit to the courthouse and with the assistance of Cheryl Myers in the Recorder's office, I discovered that the acreage surrounding and including the Beaver Lakebed in Beaver and McClellan Townships pretty much remained one parcel throughout the decades. Lemuel Milk held the original deeds through his lifetime (d. 1903). On the 1904 map of Newton County it shows that Mal-

kom Hubly owned the majority of the lands. By 1907 John J. Lawler had purchased them and by June, 1915 William Raff became one-third owner with Lawler holding two-thirds. By 1932 the Orton Land and Cattle Corporation purchased the land from Edward C. Crawford. Just who and when Crawford was is unknown at this writing. Orton held the lands until 1948 selling to the State of Indiana and Everett Madison who then sold part of the lands to the State of Indiana. (See related article in this edition.)

Today, it seems that what goes around

comes around - as most of the lands have returned to their natural beauty despite all the efforts of the land owners over the decades. What will the next decade bring to the legendary Beaver Lakebed lands? Time will tell.

Watch for announcements regarding the presentation dates for Michael Dobberstein's presentation, "Whatever Happened to Beaver Lake?"

Research Your
Newton County Roots
at www.ingenweb.org/innewton

42^d CONGRESS, } HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES. { Ex. Doc.
2^d Session. } { No. 245.

BEAVER LAKE, INDIANA.

L E T T E R

FROM THE

ACTING SECRETARY OF THE INTERIOR,

IN ANSWER TO

A resolution of the House of April 2, 1872, relative to Beaver Lake, in the county of Newton, State of Indiana.

APRIL 10, 1872.—Referred to the Committee on Commerce and ordered to be printed.

HISTORY OF THE DITCH.

I made a survey and estimate of the ditch, \$13,000. The contract was let to Austin M. Puett, brother-in-law to Governor Wright; he hired some Irish; removed the sod from the surface for a mile or so, and cut a narrow channel through the raised ridge, at a cost of about \$1,000, so as to start the water through. It soon made a channel, and the water rushed out with great force and noise, tearing out huge trees by the roots. The republicans charged the governor and Puett with swindling the State; the governor appointed an engineer, Mr. Morrison, a republican, to go and estimate the work. He did so, and reported that Puett had excavated at least ten times the amount of earth required—which was a fact. The ditch is now 100 feet wide, 18 feet deep in places. This Morrison was since my successor as city engineer of Indianapolis. A. M. Puett is now living at Greencastle, Indiana, and will testify to the above facts.

On the application, as argued on page 7, if the Commissioner decides the application of Myer & Otis informal, as being under act of 1862, or the amended application under act of 1870, not in accordance with law, then as soon as you report these facts, the actual settlers will immediately forward a proper application, to "provide for the interests of the advancing settlement, so that each pioneer may know the bounds of his new home."

In the case of Bright vs. Blake: If Blake had moved on to Bogus Island in good faith, made actual settlement, and made application in due form for a survey, it would have been granted, and he would have got the island; but that was not the intention: it suited the interests of Bright better to have a case and a defendant that he was sure to beat. Blake was not an actual settler; he was of the firm of Blake & Dagg, pork-packers, Greencastle, Indiana, and would not take his family from a luxurious home to settle on Bogus Island, supposing he had gained the suit, and got a patent from the United States, and bought the balance of the lake on riparian. Would his title be good now, as against the rights of the township to 16th section for schools? Your clients, the voters of the township, set up a claim for 16th section for schools, and ask you to urge a survey of the lake, to give them their lands. The Commissioner can hardly refuse the request.

In haste,

AMIZI B. CONDIT.

Dobberstein uncovered this document revealing letters submitted to the State appealing for a new survey of the Beaver Lakebed lands. Above is Condit's history of the original Beaver Lake Ditch that drained Beaver Lake. More of his letter is shown on the next page, as well as letters written by locals included in the document. Republished in original format.

12 The Newcomer

Chicago Tribune, June 12, 1871

A Spec of War at Beaver Lake

Trouble is brewing at Beaver Lake. The ancient hunting and fishing grounds of all our old settlers, promises to become the scene of war and bloodshed. Bogus Island and the Bluff, with all their classic associations, will soon be shaken with the tread of contending clans, bent on mischief and victory. The most intelligent account of the circumstances leading to this unhappy condition of things generally and particularly, we make up from the *Kentland Gazette*.

The United States Government has ordered a survey of Beaver Lake, which is about drained dry now, and which, during the Government surveys, overflowed a great many thousand acres of land. The Brights bought the surveyed fractions up to the lake margin from the State, the latter coming in possession by patents from the United States. The Brights claim, by riparian right, all the land to the center of the lake, and have conveyed large quantities of it to other parties. This and many other States recognize the "riparian rule" is being common law; but the United States does not, and there are many decisions of the United States Supreme Court against it. Consequently the U.S. Government has ordered a survey of the lands which have become dry, and they are now subject to pre-emption, and as soon as surveyed, to entry, like any other public lands. These facts coming to light, and the survey being order, A. B. Condit, with General Milroy for his counselor, put in an appearance at the lake last Thursday with seventy Sweed squatters, and commenced staking off their claims at 160 acres each. And erecting cabins to stay. That was calculated to "raise the natives," and it did. Since then the people from the surrounding country have made a grand rush for the region to take claims, and on Saturday last there were 250 people on the ground looking for a place to "squat." But this didn't make the situation any more interesting to Messrs. Milk and Dean and others of the Bright victims than if Condit and his colony had monopolized the whole of their lands.

To give some idea of the value of these lands, we mention that much of it grew 40 to 50 bushels of corn to the acre last year.

On Tuesday quite a number of teams passed through Morocco, in route for the lake to take claims and they are having exciting times out there.

On Saturday evening Gen. Milroy and Condit went to Mr. Dean's by his invitation, to supper, and while there Mr. Dean's hands, so we are told, arrested them, and tried to scare them away by dire threats, but Gen. Milroy didn't scare with a cent, and so they were quite willing to get rid of their Hon. They wanted to hang Condit, but the old General saw him through and was released.

COLFAX TOWNSHIP, NEWTON COUNTY, INDIANA,
September 18, 1871.

DEAR SIR: I wish you to represent my interests in securing my claim, and urge the survey for the southeast fractional quarter of section thirty-three, township thirty-one north, range nine west. I have a wife and four children; I settled on this land on the 29th day of November, 1870, and have lived there, and raised a crop this season, and and was driven off from the claim by Algy Dean, on the 11th of September, nine days ago. He threatened to put my family out by force, if I did not leave, and sent his hired men, and took out the driven-tube pump, and left me without water, except such as I could get out of a ditch not fit to use. My wife and two of my children were down sick at the time, and I was forced to leave, to get water and be in peace, and not annoyed by threats of violence.

Yours, truly,

JOSEPH S. HARTLEY.

Mr. PARKER DRESSER,
Attorney for Pre-emption Claimants, Beaver Lake.

P. S.—Dean also turned his cattle and stock on my garden, and destroyed two acres of garden vegetables.

OFFICE OF TOWNSHIP TRUSTEE,
McCLELLAND TOWNSHIP, NEWTON COUNTY, INDIANA,
September 18, 1871.

DEAR SIR: Learning that you are attorney for pre-emption claimants of the Beaver Lake lands in this township, I request you to act as attorney for McClelland Township, to act as their attorney, to present the claims of the township to the sixteenth or school section of township thirty north, range nine west, and secure said section to the township, and urge a speedy survey of said lands.

DAVID S. LARKINS,
Township Trustee.

Mr. PARKER DRESSER.

BEAVER LAKE, August 9, 1871.

Myers Condit and others take notice that I forbid you entering the inclosure known as Milk's and Dean's Beaver Lake lands until our ownership is at an end. If you persist in doing so, I shall treat you as though you were entering my door-yard against my orders.

ALGY DEAN.

Electa Ann Derphy, wife of William Derphy, deceased, of Newton County, Indiana, in the township of McClelland, has bargained and leased to the said Hiram Goodwin, on section eight, southeast of southeast, west half southeast, east half southwest, the said above described premises, for which Hiram Goodwin agrees to pay \$5 a month; and he agrees to pay this in advance every three months, and he agrees to keep the premises in good repair around the house and orchard, and he agrees that there shall be no green timber cut on the premises without consent from Electa A. Derphy.

KANKAKEE CITY, September 17, 1871.

Some time in the month of February, 1869, I went to Beaver Lake to find me a place to live and keep my stock, and went to the county-seat of Newton County to find some trace of some land, and found that I could squat on most any place where I could get a chance or where there was no one on. I came to Beaver Lake, and looked around and found a vacant house, about one mile from Bogus Island, and found that it had been left, and was in danger of being burned by the prairie fires. I inquired who owned it, and went and hired it, and paid \$15, and went and packed up my things and started to move to it, and when some ten miles on my road I met some men from Beaver Lake, and they told me that Dean and Berlin had moved one of their gang into the house. I was out of doors with all my things, teams and family, that I had with me. I had to go and find some place, and sell my stock at a reduced rate, for I was out of doors, and lost my money that I had paid, and my expenses. I did not know at the time that they drove people off of that land, but thought that I had a right to settle on it. I think that they injured me more than \$300. I understand that they have taken this land, and have held it ever since, and what has become of the women that I do not know.

Mr. Parker Dresser, I wish you to lay this before the commission, and see if I have any rights to that land.

Yours, respectfully,

HIRAM GOODWIN.

Above are a few more of the letters that were included in the documents regarding re-surveying the Beaver Lake Beds in 1872. Also included were Condit's response to the multi-page document that Milk's attorney's submitted. Those pages were not included in this document. The entire document is available via Google books on line. Republished in original format.

Home is Where Your Story Begins

Dr. Wallace Weston Tate of Lincoln Township

Submitted by Beth Bassett

Dr. Wallace Weston Tate was born in Columbus, Franklin County, Ohio in 1870 to Colin Campbell and Marie (Weston) Tate. His parents married on October 17, 1867 in Rock, Wisconsin. In 1897 he married Christine Palmer (1866-1965), and had three children, Helen (1899-1980); Arthur C. (1901-1978); George C. (1903-1964). Christine's obituary stated that she had lived in Argos for 78 years, which indicates she moved there in 1887. When the couple divorced is not known, but in the 1910 Lincoln Township Census records Dr. Tate is listed alone yet married for 13 years. By 1920 he is listed alone, single; same with 1930 census records. In 1939 he married Ann Defries (1898-1979), and they are listed together in the 1940 census records.

He arrived in Thayer in 1908, setting up a general practice. In May of 1947 he was honored by his community with a birthday party. He admitted to delivering over 1100 babies. Society member Sig Boezeman was one of those babies, and he was gifted by a dear friend Doc Tate's medical bag and a pair of birthing forceps. This thoughtful gift is one of his most cherished possessions.

Doc Tate died on December 23, 1948. This is about all of the personal information that I could garner on Doc Tate, but the "History of Roselawn, Thayer and Shelby, Indiana, the First 100 Years" is sprinkled with recollections of him and his practice and a few are included here:

"When Doc Tate (the local doctor, a general practitioner who lived in Thayer) died, the whole school went to the visitation at the Tate's home. He had delivered all of the kids." - *Ernie Binge*.

"Women usually had their babies at home but when they needed to go to the hospital, they were taken there by Dr. W. W. Tate, Thayer's doctor for 42 years. Often, he would make house calls as far away as Lowell, driving his horse and buggy across the country. Later, when the automobile came out, he bought his first car, and was able to get to his patients much quicker."

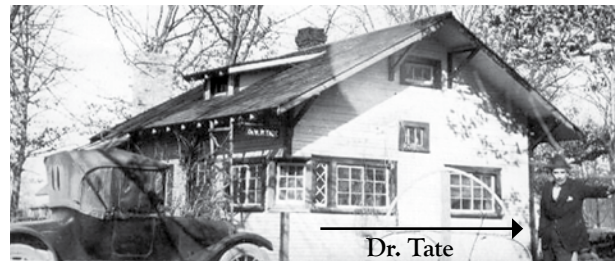
"He charged one dollar for office calls and \$2.50 for house calls, which he made any hour of the day or night. Mrs. Tate remembers that his patients sometimes had no money, and often he would bring home a dozen eggs or loaves of homemade bread in place of his fee. She said that he was just as happy with the eggs for he felt that a doctor's job was to help people.

"The days of helping others and visit-

ing on porches with neighbors have for the most part vanished, along with the bustling activities of Thayer. The straightening of the Kankakee River was partially responsible for the change. Many of the citizens of Thayer, among them Dr. Tate, strongly opposed the straightening, fearing the consequences and loss of wildlife." 1969 unknown newspaper article.

"Nobody has but good words to tell of

old Doc Tate. Dr. Wallace Tate had an office, once at the IOOF hall and once at the now Mary Sanderson-Helen Fehlman home, was an early day wizard. He was said to have never lost a patient during the big flu epidemic in 1918 and was thought to never turn away a patient for lack of funds. He would take most anything in trade and once had a pair of socks hanging on the wall - one of his payments." - *Pat Tilton, Shelby*



Ann (DeFries) Tate



The content of each of these photos gives us a good idea of how Doc Tate's 42-years of practice and his transportation progressed over the years. A single room office grew to a larger building. His sign shingle remained the same however. The 1947 photo on the left was the last photograph of him.

Pages of the Past

by Janet Miller - Excerpts taken from the Newton County Enterprise Spring, 1921

Newton County

Slight tremors of an earthquake were noticeable here about 6:30 o'clock Monday morning. In some parts of Indiana, especially at Terre Haute, the shock was sufficiently strong to rattle windows and dislodge large pieces of furniture.

Kentland

Governor and Mrs. Warren T. McCray came from Indianapolis Friday and remained until the first of the week. They were joined here by their daughter, Miss Lucile McCray, who was returning from a three week's visit with friends in Iowa, and by their son, George, of Purdue.

Public Notice: As I was at the Christian Church Sunday evening someone took the opportunity to take my car for a drive, and in order to return the car before church was dismissed it looked as if it had been driven at a very high speed. The car was badly damaged, one wheel being bent and the tire hanging to the axle, and there were things stolen from the car. The ones who did it are known, and if there isn't a settlement within two weeks, other steps will be taken. **FRANK WHALEY**

Will Open Bids On New School House. Bids for the joint construction of the new joint high school building to be erected by Kentland and Jefferson Township will be opened at 2 o'clock this afternoon at a joint session of the school board and township trustee to be held at the court house. There will probably be twelve or fifteen bidders, as inquiries have been received from contractors from Chicago, St. Louis, and various points in Indiana and Illinois.

Lecture-Recital by Carl Sandburg. Carl Sandburg, one of America's most popular and modern poets, and a second Walt Whitman, is to come to Kentland under the auspices of the Literary Department of the Woman's Club, Thursday evening, April 28th at Trinity Church. Mr. Sandburg will recite his own poems and give us some musical readings from his own ballads. This is indeed a rare treat for the Kentland community. Mr. Sandburg is one of our own fellow citizens, his home is in Chicago, and in his reading tours over the United States and Europe he is recognized as one of the most original and entertaining poets of our day.

Colfax

County Commissioner George H. Hillis was down from his home in Colfax Tuesday on business. Mr. Hillis is away on a ten-day visit. He says wheat and rye are looking good and farm work is wonderfully advanced

for this time of year, made possible by the good weather we have been having.

Colfax Township Consolidated Schools Guests of Men's Club in Kentland Today. In harmony with plans developed by W. O. Schanlaub, county superintendent of schools, and James D. Rathbun, president of the Men's Club of Kentland, the pupils of the five upper grades of the Colfax Township consolidated schools are to be guests of Kentland today. Miss Mattie Geesa is with the delegation and the pupils in the party are Reva Arnold, Mary Handley, Emma Berenda, Hershel Hickman, Rueben Wooten, Harry Sullivan, Chester Henderson, Alfred Rush, Percy Styck, Grace Sladek, Edna Wooten, Joseph Berenda, Frances Parks, Walter Stohlman, Violet Lock, Kizzie Guthrie, Chester Lock, Myrtle Arnold, Anna Sullivan, Ray Handley, Helen Bergren, Lucile Henderson, LeRoy Patterson, Ruby Rush, Yarrow Kriz, Charles Rush, James Styck, Franklin Styck, Alice Stohlman, Elmer Sladek, Edna Sullivan, Jimmie Berenda, Reinhold Herre, Ross Hillis, Helen Kriz. As guests of the Men's Club the visiting school will be met by members of the committee at Orchard Lake Stock Farm at 10 o'clock. A drive will be made through the 2,200 acre farm and the prize Herefords of Governor McCray's herd will be lined up by Herdsman Hendry for inspection. The delegation then comes to Kentland to the Court House giving the pupils some first hand information on county government. Each of the several officers will make a short talk on the duties and functions of the particular office, and Judge Williams will address the visitors on the work of the court. At the noon hour the guests will be served a dinner at the Arcade Hotel. After dinner an inspection will be made of the Ainsworth-Boone seed house, showing our young farmer guests the method of storing, grading and testing of seed corn. At 1:45 a theater party will be given by Manager Shobe at the Kentland Theater, and for the amusement of the guests Mr. Shobe will run Charlie Chaplin's latest and best scenario, "The Kid." Following the show the guests will depart for their home, and we trust will carry with them pleasant memories of their day spent at the county seat.

News from Roselawn and Northern Newton

Roy Sheldon has moved to Morocco and will do garage work for Wm. Boyle in his new place of business in Morocco.

At the Lincoln Township spelling contest Feb. 25, in the auditorium of the Roselawn school, much interest was shown. At

noon hot lunch was served to all pupils and teachers present and many patrons, who were present at the contest, alike, enjoyed the hot soups as a co-partner of the regular menu of the school bucket sandwiches. The judges were Miss Flora Frye, Mrs. Delaney, and Mrs. Zac Spitler. The trustee, Mr. Spitler, and Miss Merna Bess pronounced the words. The last pupil on the floor from Thayer School was Patrick Hallacki; from Buck Horn School, Grace Cox; Allegro Barley was the last pupil up of the Roselawn School, from the Intermediate room, and the honors were won by Edward Rouse of the eighth grade, Roselawn.

Mrs. Fogli Dead. Mrs. Benjamin Fogli died at her home in Water Valley Thursday. She formerly lived in Hegewisch, Ill., but for many years had made her home with her family at Water Valley. Her remains were taken to Whiting where funeral services were held. The family is well known in this county, having kept a hotel on the Kankakee River for many years.

Brook

Much excitement is being felt concerning the coming sectional tournament in basketball at Gary, on Friday and Saturday, March 4th and 5th. Quite a number of Brook people are expected to go.

The school was visited on Thursday by two inspectors from the Fire Insurance Company. The "fire drill" was exhibited for them and they expressed themselves as well pleased with the way the pupils vacated the building.

The county Sunday School basketball tournament that was held here Saturday at the Community Building was a center of interest. The whole affair was carried on in a good spirit and friendly rivalry. The final game was played in the evening between the Brook Methodist and the U. B.'s. The score stood in favor of the U. B.'s giving them the banner for the year.

Morocco

The eleventh annual county spelling contest was held in the assembly of the public school building at Morocco, Saturday, March 19th. After opening music, Miss Olive Lewis, the winner of last year's contest at the head of the thirteen contestants, entered the room in single file and marched to the places reserved for them in front of the assembly room. Miss Lewis, who is now a student in the high school at Morocco, was introduced to the audience and the contest was then placed in charge of the officials. Miss Esther Weidenbaker, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Oscar Weidenbaker of Goodland was declared the winner. Miss Weidenbaker is a student in the

seventh grade in the Goodland School and is but twelve years of age. Miss Thelma Eller of the Morocco School, Beaver Township, won the second place; Miss Marjorie Porter of the Ade School, Washington Township, third place; and Edward Roush of the Roselawn School, Lincoln Township, the fourth place. Harold Radcliff of the Templeton School, McClellan Township, was awarded the prize for being the youngest to enter the contest. He was born December 8, 1910.

Goodland

A. D. Babcock was over from Goodland Tuesday. He has just received from W. H. Hershman four pieces of land coral, and prizes them very highly as additions to his museum.

Farmers Enjoy Big Feed at Goodland.

The Grant Township Farm Bureau, with the members of their families and guests from town enjoyed a banquet and entertainment held Monday evening at the large assembly room of the Goodland School building. Some three hundred or more were in attendance and the affair was most enjoyable throughout. Samuel E. Molter, with characteristic zeal, was chairman of the committee in charge, and in the language of the side show barker, there was something new and startling every twenty minutes. The program was opened by the singing of "America" by the audience, followed by interesting talks by W. T. Cory, George Mitten, B. C. Neary, Miss Madge McKee, and County Agent Davis. There were also readings by Rev. Barnett and Miss Louise Constable, the program closing with a concert by Madame Zozo's Band, a company of young ladies in fancy costumes under the direction of Miss Grace Mitten. A sumptuous spread followed, and was served under the direction of Will Babcock as chef, assisted by Fred Neary, Archibald Constable, A. B. Ray and Thomas Hancock.

Jackson Township

On Same Farm for Over 50 Years. Uncle Press Roberts, one of Newton County's fast disappearing pioneers, and famous for over a quarter of a century to the younger generation as a watermelon grower was a visitor to the city Wednesday. Mr. Roberts is coming somewhat enfeebled with the weight of his more than 77 years and is not as sprightly as of yore. Born near Bedford, Indiana, he came to Jackson Township, Newton County, with his young wife in 1864, when that section was a raw prairie and deer and other wild game was there in abundance. He found it hard work to make both ends meet and pay for the farm he bought in 1869 and on which he still resides, and took up teaching as a side issue. He taught 31 winter and 3 summer terms, and many of today's middle age citizens of Jasper and Newton Counties were pupils of his during those years. Having resided for 57

years in Jackson Township and for 52 years on the same farm "Uncle Press" is entitled to be classified as one of the oldest continuous

residents of that township and county, as well as one of the most well-known Democrats. *Courtesy of the Rensselaer Democrat.*



Fire Guts Historical Goodland Building

"This picture was taken Tuesday morning from southwest end of the former Z. F. Little building in Goodland as flames swept through it. It housed a bowling alley and restaurant equipment and five families occupied apartments on the second floor. None of the contents were saved." September 21, 1950, *Newton County Enterprise*

Answers to Do You Know?

By Janet Miller - Questions on Page 6

1. Beaver Township: According to history the highest point in Newton County is located in Beaver Township at the site of Smith Cemetery.
2. Colfax Township: The largest Indian camp site that was located in Newton County is located in Section 7 of Colfax Township and in the early days of Beaver Lake this area was called Bingaman's Island.
3. Grant Township: The other story of how Goodland got its name was the following: A woman dropped a basket of eggs and said "Good Land"! So, which story do you believe is correct as how Goodland got its name?
4. Iroquois Township: According to historical accounts the first town of Brook was located 2 1/2 miles southeast of the current town of Brook, near the crossing of two creeks (or brooks, hence the town name). This is in the area of the first courthouse in Section 29 on 1100S. There was a post office established there as early as 1837. Brook Post Office was on a postal route with weekly mail carried by horseback from Logansport to Bunkum, Illinois and back.
5. Jackson Township: The road in Jackson Township was called Molasses Street. "Molasses Street" got its name from the molasses press that was along the road. This was quite a gathering place for folks as sugar cane was brought from surrounding areas to be pressed, boiled down and skimmed to become the end product, molasses. Early settlers living on that road were Ben Yoder, Eli and Ira Chupp, David Hochstetler and Harry Hufty.



Resource Center and Monthly Meetings

We are hoping to re-open the Resource Center in Kentland in August, depending upon the status of the Covid-19 Pandemic.

Members will be informed in regards to when the monthly meetings will proceed and any precautions, if any that may be necessary. Thank you for your patience during this time.

Iroquois River Bridge Destroyed

Newton County Enterprise, 1951

This is the way the Iroquois River Bridge on U. S. 41 about four miles north of Kentland looked last Thursday morning after a transport loaded with 5800 gallons of gasoline exploded. The intense heat from the burning inferno caused the overhead supports of the bridge to buckle thus permitting the bridge to bend into the river. The tanker was from the Hannah Trucking Company in the Calumet district and was driven by Dean Kimball, 23, of Westville, who was burned to death. The gas burned for several hours and the molten truck was not removed until Monday of this week. Kimball was a World War Veteran and was unmarried. His body was taken to the Hershman Funeral Home in Brook and was identified by relatives.

The Newcomer




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Mission Statement: It is the hope of the volunteers and members of the Newton County Historical Society will bring together those people interested in the history of Newton County, and will promote an understanding and appreciation for the people and community of Newton County through research, preservation, restoration, education and publications. (c) 2020 Newton County Historical Society. All rights reserved.

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