

# The Newcomer

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Newton County: Indiana's Youngest County

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### MARSH FIRES IN INDIANA.

Dwellings and Barns Burned Near Crown Point—Thousands of Fattening Cattle in Danger.

CROWN POINT, Ind., Oct. 9.—One of the most disastrous marsh fires that ever occurred in the county is raging in the Kankakee marsh, which covers twenty sections of land twelve miles south of this city, and before long thousands of tons of hay and farm buildings will no doubt be destroyed.

It is supposed the heavy growth in the marsh was ignited by a passing engine near Fuller Island. So quickly did the flames travel eastward that Robert McCoy and Marcelles Smith, who live on the island, were forced to flee to the pasture land with their families, where they watched the destruction of their houses by the flames, as well as all their other buildings on the island. From this point the fire traveled two miles east, and for a few minutes it looked as though many farmhouses on the Lowell Road would be consumed, but luckily the wind changed and turned the fire southward, in which direction it is now rapidly traveling.

Nelson Morris's big ranch, where thousands of cattle are being fattened for his slaughter house, is in immediate danger.

This fire is a repetition of the big one of 1895, when \$200,000 was lost. Hundreds of men have fought the flames all day, but the high winds are keeping the upper hand. Shelby and Thayer are in great danger.

The New York Times

Published: October 10, 1897

## Harvesting the Bounties of the Old Kankakee River

by Beth Bassett

Newton County is graced with two rivers flowing through her lands. South you will find the Iroquois and north the Kankakee, the subject of this article. Recorded history states that a variety of tribes of Potawatomi, Miami and Iroquois Indians, and perhaps others, were the first known to inhabit the banks of these two rivers in large numbers until the Indian removal began in the 1830s. As early as 1835 white settlers were known to have settled along the riverbanks in our area, which provided them the means of establishing homesteads. Both rivers offered abundant fauna, fish and fowl for sustenance, timber for building cabins and a constant source of water. Eventually towns would grow from the expansion of these settlements as would the harvesting of the bounties of the Kankakee River, its vast marshes and stands of timber.

The Friends of the Kankakee website states: "The Kankakee River originates near South Bend, Indiana and flows west for about 140 miles until its confluence with the Des Plains River near Channahon, Illinois forming the Illinois River. Approximately 5,800 square miles in portions of 22 counties in Illinois and Indiana presently drain into the river.

"Originally about 80% of the length of the Kankakee flowed through an immense wetland known as the Grand Kankakee Marsh. It was the lowest and wettest part of a vast flat plain made up of a thick layer of sand laid down by glaciers some 10,000 to 15,000 years ago. It was about 100 miles in length, averaged about 8 miles in width, and was 3 to 4 feet deep about 8 months a year. The size of the marsh is constantly debated; however, the area most of the public would identify as "wet land" was probably near 500,000 acres.

"Prior to 1852, about 250 miles of the Kankakee River and 95% of the Grand Marsh were found in Indiana. Dredging from 1852 to 1917 removed 2,000 river bends. The river that had meandered 250 miles creating oxbows, bayous, marshes, and sand islands was channeled into a straight 90-mile ditch. Illinois citizens successfully fought channelization and most of the 60 miles of the river in Illinois remains in its natural, meandering state. The Grand Marsh, which had been the largest wetland in North America, was reduced to approximately 30,000 acres."

Valparaiso Professor Alfred Meyer described the Kankakee Marsh history in 1935: "The transformation of the Kankakee from a "haven of wild life" into a "modern home for man" may be treated under four stages of settlement: (1) the period of the Indian hunter and the French trader; (2) the immigration of the pioneer trapper and the frontier farmer; (3) the epoch of the stock farmer and the sportsman fowler; and, finally, (4) the present joint occupancy by the farmer and the river resorters."

Today the area utilizes the Kankakee River for recreational and agricultural purposes with residents co-existing with the ebb and flow of her mighty waters.

### Marsh Hay

The swamp proper followed the river for two-thirds of the distance from Momence to South Bend, generally less than a mile in width and a maximum of two-three miles in its middle course in northern Jasper and adjacent counties. The Native Americans always had gathered the wild rice that grew abundantly in its waters. Wild grasses and sedges and fields of wild hay that grew were harvested by the white men in huge amounts from the marshes of these swamps. Marsh Hay constituted the chief, if not the only, source of hay as well. *Continued on page 3 >*



A crew of men are ready to begin harvesting marsh hay from the Boyle farm in the early years along the Kankakee. Hanley collection.

# President's Thoughts

By Kay Babcock

I am late getting this written...on page that is, I have written it in my head several times and told myself no, not that...

The Society had a wonderful Christmas Open House and then took the month of January off, at least, no meeting, but our faithful volunteers still opened the Center. My thanks to those who helped move things to the Center for decorating and then back. Thanks to those who helped decorate and those who brought food to the Open House. It was a very nice day with time for catching up the friends and enjoying many wonderful things to eat.

February is here, so meetings will resume. Rich has many good programs lined up for us.

My thoughts have been all over the board - it is an election year. I don't think America has ever been so divided since the Civil War. The media makes it hard to sort out the truth, how will history report this in the years to come?

The Coronavirus is sweeping the globe. The Black Plague was spread by fleas, carried by rodents on ships, wagons, people going from one place to another. Between 1347 and fading in the late 1350's, it killed 25 million people. China put a clamp on the doctor who first discovered the Coronavirus, he later died. By the time they admitted the vi-

rus was real it was already moving around the globe. The first plague happened at a time when people were just learning about germs. The current one is happening at a time when we know all about germs...was history just ignored?

This month Bill and I made a trip to Florida. We went to be with an aunt on her 99th birthday. And for Bill, to visit an old dear friend. Both of this people are dear to us. Both are a part of our history. Both are a huge part of their family's history. Have we taken the time to ask all the right questions? We know there will be a time we will say "if only I could ask". How many times have you

thought Mom would know that, Dad would remember? Losing our loved ones leave big holes, memories are the way to honor them. History comes to us in so many ways, the written word, pictures, by word from one generation to the next, the historical sites we preserve, the monuments we put up...good or bad we need to keep these, we can't forget or change history to suit ourselves. We need it or we will make the same mistakes over and over.

Spring is coming, I see little green things popping up in the yard. It is time to get out and find a new adventure - we will be glad to help you find something that will interest you in the Resource Center.

**Research Your  
Newton County Roots  
at [www.ingenweb.org/innewton](http://www.ingenweb.org/innewton)**

## Do You Know?

By Janet Miller - Answers on page 15

1. How many of Newton County's ten township names reference a President of the U.S? Can you name them? Then, can you name the rest of the townships?
2. When did the very active Lincoln Township Volunteer Fire Department officially incorporate? The first fire station used by the LTVFD was in a garage. Do you know who owned this garage?
3. What town in Newton County holds a "Grand Prix" each summer? The Grand Prix continues today, but what year did it begin? What former Indiana governor was Grand Marshal for it one year? What two local men initiated this event?
4. What are the names of the two towns located in Lincoln Township? They were both platted the same year. What was that year?
5. Have you heard of the hamlet of Pogue? Where in Newton County is it located?

## Good Neighbors in 1966



Pictured above are the neighbors and friends of Bernard Telfer who believe in the good neighbor policy and gathered at his farm home last week to harvest 80 acres of corn. Mr. Telfer is recovering at Home Hospital at Lafayette from injuries sustained sometime ago in a corn picker accident. In the background you can see some of the equipment used in the operation.

Back row, l-r: Kenneth White, Mel Murphy, Joe McEwan, John White, Kenneth McCarty, Dale Knochel, Leo McGraw, Bill Hall,

James Staton, Bernard McGraw, Mrs. Louis Wolfe, Ed Bill, Mrs. Helen White, Loyd Staton, Vernon Delay, Jack Murphy, Harold Risley, Harvey Goff, Charles Mulligan, Kenneth Cahill and Arthur Telfer.

Front row, l-r: Charles Smith, Kenneth Murphy, Russell Collins Jr., Kenneth Roberts, Francis Polen, Russell Collins Sr., William Terrell, James Blake, Gordon Danner, Robert White, Ernie Burke, Robert Hall and Joe Bedinger - Photo by Baumer. Posted on Facebook.

Continued from page 1 > as pasturage for livestock. The shorter and tenderer hay in the shallower marshes and on the margins of the islands, was popular as horse and livestock feed; the coarse, tough hay from the deeper marshes was used as livestock bedding or as packing material for manufactured products. What was not pastured or fed locally was baled using steam presses and shipped to the Chicago market.

If the season favored the farmer, he might without much difficulty harvest the hay by a hand scythe or a mower by mid-July/August. But should it be a wet summer, sleds, drawn by horses shod with sandal-like shoes, had to be used to haul the hay out of the marsh; or it was carried out on a pair of poles by two individuals walking tandem fashion. If it was impossible to reach the farmstead, the hay was temporarily stacked on an island nearby and removed later to the farm premises when conditions permitted. Sometimes it had to be cut on the ice, which resulted in forage of rather inferior quality.

Ditching as a legally controlled enter-

prise received attention as early as 1852 and ditching by hand was reported in Lake County in 1854. But not until steam dredges had been brought into operation in 1884 was there any considerable progress made in drainage. Ditch drainage converted the wild hay marshes into open pasture suitable for grazing or grain fields.

These marsh hay pastures invited a cattle economy which was first developed by Nels Morris. Practically all the Kankakee Marsh and swamp lands of Northeast Newton and Jasper County totaling 23,000 acres were owned by Morris. Thousands of head of cattle, many from Texas, were shipped and grazed on tracts fenced into units the size of a section or so before the herds were driven north to the stockyards in Chicago. Other cattlemen included the Brown estate in Southern Lake County with 5,000 acres near Thayer. Certainly there were other local farms that took advantage of the marsh hay, including the Boyle, Criswell and Lawbaugh families who are in the photos with this article.

### Timber Harvesting

At one time along the Kankakee River the standing timber were towering and had massive trunks measuring 3-4' in diameter. The islands were covered with a heavy growth of timber in the early 1800s. Some of these were Shag Bark Hickory; Common Hickory; Shellbark Hickory; Swamp Ash; Willow; Soft Maple; Hard Maple; Hackberry; Slippery Elm; Sycamore; Beech; Catalpa; Pawpaw; Box Elder; Chestnut; Yellow Poplar; Cottonwood; Swamp Oak; Sweet Gum; Pin Oak; Red Oak; Honey Locust; Cedar; Gray Oak; Elm; White Oak (used for railings); Black Walnut; Wild Cherry; Gray Ash; Hazelnut; Black Locust; and Sassafras. Cyprus was also found along the river, some utilized in the building of the Fogli Hotel near Shelby.

These species were utilized by the residents and businesses for making fence posts and railings, building and fuel: Osage Orange aka Hedge Black Ash; Black Oak; White Oak.

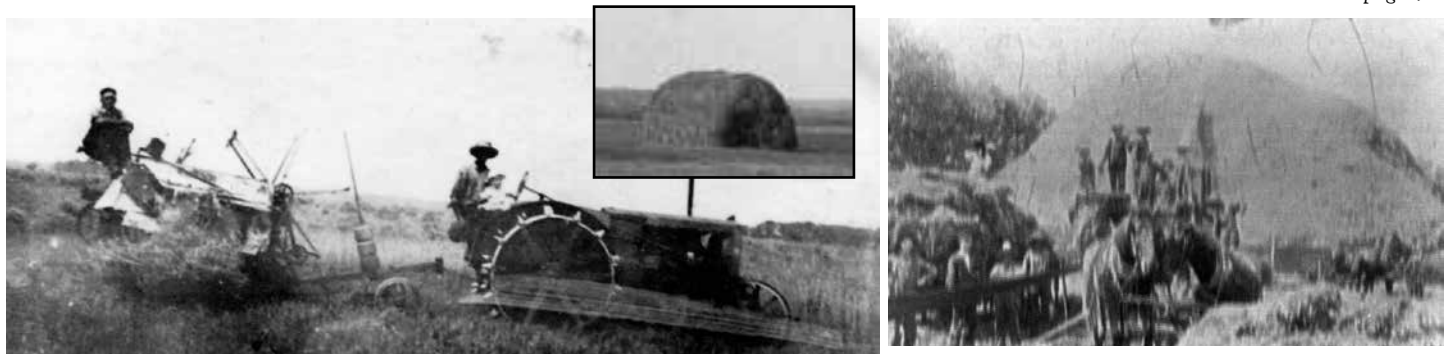
Momence settled in 1834 and depleted the scanty timber available there. The Kankakee swamp and marsh land in Indiana gave them access to a bounty of timberlands. Commercial lumbering was soon in place and trees were felled in the marsh and floated down the river to sawmills in Momence.

The first steamboat to sail the river was The White Star, built in 1866 by Bissell and Cornell to move lumber and cord wood down the river to Momence. Common flat boats or scows measured 30'x10' and were pulled or pushed by the steamers downstream. The twisting nature of the river made it difficult

Continued on page 4 >



A Lawbaugh photo of creating bales from marsh hay with a steam press. Credit "RTS100"



Above: Another Lawbaugh photo of binding hay marsh; Right, Not the best photograph of men stacking pressed bails on the right with a large marsh hay stack in the background. Lafa Criswell farm. Inset: marsh hay stacked on the Boyle farm. Credit "RTS100"



Another view of the Boyle hay crew. These may be the mowing or wagon teams for the harvesting of marsh hay. Credit "RTS100"

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Continued from Page 3> to move the timber; in later years, portable sawmills moved to the sites where the lumberjacks were working.

On the return trip up-river, supplies such as chalk block salt was loaded and sold along the way to support the growing number of cattle ranging in the marsh during the summer.

The Monon railroad was laid through northern Newton County in 1878. As work progressed, the railroad built a trestle that crossed the Kankakee at Shelby. This halted the navigation of steamboats treks upriver at that point.

The Chicago fire of 1871 took large red and white Oak, Beech and Maple trees which were sent to rebuild the city. Timber thieving became a regular occurrence.

Fence posts were even used as currency in the early days. One good ash post would be the cost of a postage stamp. James DeWolfe accepted posts in trade for staples at his general store at the White Oak (Lake Village) Landing.

Burt Burroughs reported that a saloon floor in Momence was made from slabs of Black Walnut 18' wide, probably grown from trees grown in Newton or Lake County.

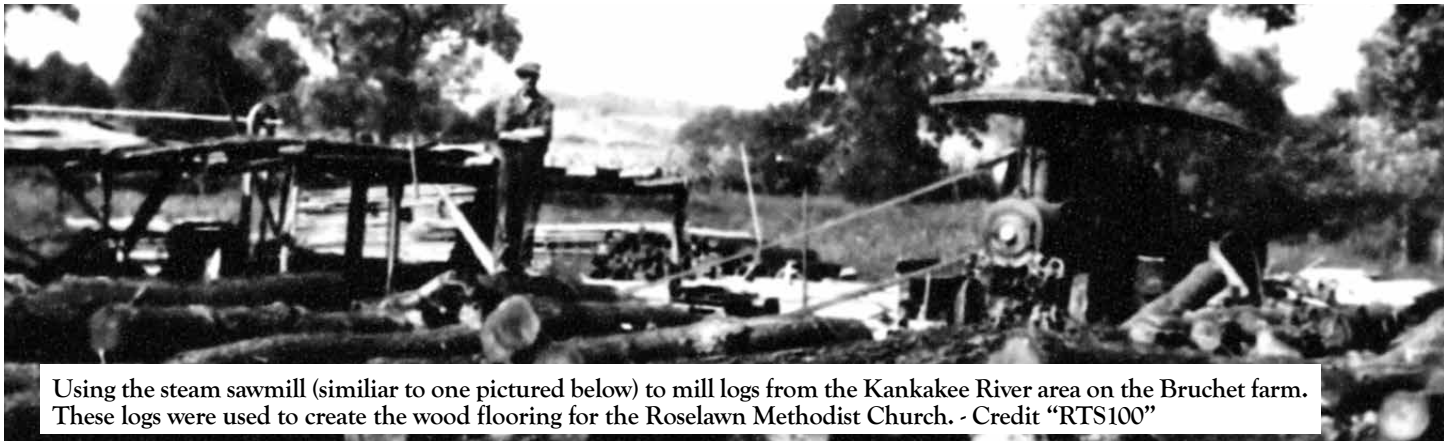
When the Methodist Church in Roselawn was built, timber from the C. C. Bruchet farm and Israel Cox farm at Blue Grass were sawn into wood for lumber to build the church.

Another article in this edition "The Tragedy of the Trees," details the labor intense process of logging along the Kankakee.

Several sources were utilized compiling this history and photographs: Valparaiso University Professor Alfred H. Meyer's 1935 paper entitled "The Kankakee Marsh of Northern Illinois and Indiana"; the writings of John Hodson, founder and President of the Kankakee Valley Historical Society; Fay Nichols' "The Kankakee"; and "Roselawn, Thayer and Shelby, the First 100 Years (RTS100)"; The Friends of the Kankakee website.



Harvesting was a tiresome, yet rewarding venture for those lumberjacks of the Kankakee River area. Here a crew takes a break amongst logs awaiting to be milled. Credit "RTS100"



Using the steam sawmill (similar to one pictured below) to mill logs from the Kankakee River area on the Bruchet farm. These logs were used to create the wood flooring for the Roselawn Methodist Church. - Credit "RTS100"



Steam Sawmill in Roselawn: Sept 8, 1881 a local news item mentioned that this sawmill would be moved to Bumbaloo (Hank Granger's lands) to this place (Roselawn) this week. Note the unidentified man on the right. Credit "RTS100"

## Just a Smith Story!

by Janet Miller

Probably about 30 years ago I met Lynn and Barbara Wilfong at the Newton County Fair. They were involved with the horse racing there as they raise and race horses. Lynn called the harness races and Barbara kept the books for the racing association. We, of course, were there as Rich was on the Fair Board and I worked in the fair office. They were from Rush and Hancock Counties, Indiana. I told them that some of my ancestors were from Hancock County many years ago.

One of the years they were at the fair they asked us if we would be interested in selling them some property to build a home. Several years later that actually happened! They are now our neighbors and have a beautiful home and grounds in what was once our west pasture.

Barbara and I found we had lots in common and have been great friends ever since. Probably 15 years ago she called me one day and wanted me to come down and see what Lynn had received from his uncle, knowing how interested I was in history and genealogy. So, I did. It was a very well done genealogy book on the Wilfong family. As we were looking through the book we came upon the name of Samuel Smith and his wife, Parthena Smith. I told Barbara – I think I have a Samuel and Parthena Smith in my genealogy too! I wasn't sure about Samuel but there aren't too many people named Parthena. She said no way! I went home and came back with my information and sure enough it was the same Samuel and Parthena Smith!! Imagine that, Lynn and I are fourth cousins! Lynn is descended from Richard Smith, the second son of Samuel and Parthena and I am descended from Lavina Smith, the second daughter. Isn't that amazing!! Here we are, cousins living as neighbors in Newton County and our common ancestors from Hancock County one hundred miles south. How could this be?

Over the years we have been going to take a genealogy trip to Hancock County but life seemed to get in the way. However, in the fall of 2014 we made it happen. We visited Greenfield, the county seat of Hancock County, and their library. We did not find too much information that we did not already know. Their information was rather sparse. With Lynn driving and being the guide we did drive around the county and visited the town of Wilkinson which was the area our Smith family was located. He also showed us Willow Branch near Wilkinson where he grew up. Nearby was the Simmons Cemetery where we found the stone of Samuel Smith. Barbara took a picture of the fourth cousins with the stone of their great-great-great grandfather! We did not find Parthena's stone. Lynn has many generations of his family buried there.

Barbara still says that she and I have so much in common that it really should be us who are the cousins!

Is this Smith story a coincidence or is it fate?



Fourth cousins Lynn Wilfong, left and right Janet Miller.

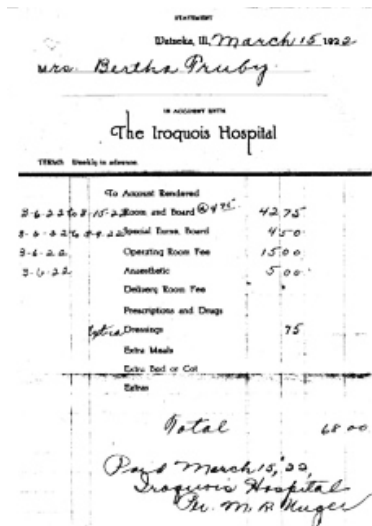
## Before There Was Insurance

By David Truby

While recently rummaging through my attic I came upon a cardboard box full of old photo albums and a folder labeled "Important Papers". Further investigation revealed that these papers were relative to events in my paternal grandparents lives. One of the documents that I want to share is a bill/receipt from the Iroquois Hospital of Watsika Illinois, still in business, dated 1922 just 98 years ago. By the date I can tell that the hospital stay and medical treatment was related to the birth of an uncle of mine and required a nine day stay.

Before we discount the total \$68 bill as pocket change, less than a third of my present day phone bill, we must think of a dollar value 98 years ago. According to Wikipedia a 1922 dollar was worth about \$15 today. That makes the hospital stay for this birth costing over \$1000 in today's money.

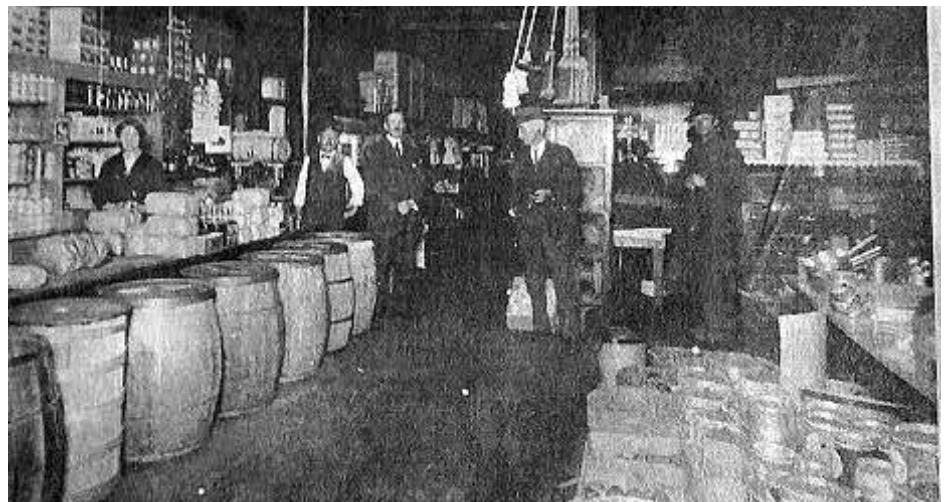
It's no wonder there were so many home births back then with a Midwife instead of an attending Physician.



## Early Photo of Edward J. Funk

The interior of the E.S. Yeager General Store which was located in Earl Park. The grocery section is featured in the article. The store carried a complete line of dry goods and groceries and was owned and operated by Yeager for 60 years. Pictured l-r: Bert Hughes; Mr. Yeager, owner; Billy Fields, Hibbert Holdwig, salesman and Edward J. Funk. The barrels along the counter (left) held sugar, salt, flour, beans, coffee and dried peas; in the right corner can be seen barrels of Karo syrup.

The store also carried a line of hardware from the items seen on the counter behind the syrup. The business eventually sold to Charles Leavitt. The photo was published in the 1969 *Newton County Enterprise*.



# One Man's Life-Long Commitment to Kentland

By Beth Bassett

I recently had the honor of sitting down with Dave Smart to record a bit of the history of his 52-year-old business in Kentland Home Furnishings, and his Newton County roots.

He began, "I was born in Morocco and raised in Lake Village. My parents were Todd and Edmere Smart. My mom was active in community affairs and my dad worked at Inland Steel and farmed. I graduated in 1962 from Morocco High School."

On his 21st birthday he received notice from Uncle Sam that it was time for him to serve his country. His Army basic training was in Ft. Knox after which he transferred to Virginia and became skilled in electricity and refrigeration. His tour of duty was in Germany for 1.5 years returning to Newton County in 1967.

He took a job at Schultz T.V. and Appliance that was located west of Lake Village on State Road 10. Dave told me that in 1968 two of his co-workers, John Turbyfill and Harold Beasley quit to open their own store in Kentland. Dave joined the duo and the rest is history. Dave gives credit to Ron Humphrey, the Kentland Chamber of Commerce president at that time, for his involvement in bringing them to Kentland. A building owned by Gene Ashton on the west side of town would become the location of Home Furnishings, Inc., opening on December 2, 1968.

From the beginning the store has sold recliners, bedroom, dining and living room furniture and their accessories and kitchen appliances. When Bob Willett went into the TV Cable business, he sold his RCA dealership to John Turbyfill, adding televisions to their store offerings. Of course, their inventory changed with the times and the economy - and when VCRs became popular these were added as well as VHS tape rentals. Their service department also continued through the years as well as home delivery.

In December 1969 a grand opening was planned for their new building which only took five months to complete. Those involved in the construction were listed on one page of a two page ad in the *Newton County Enterprise*: Wilson Brothers; Walter Small Oil Co.; Hopkins Electric; Kentland Lumber and Coal; Bryant Plumbing and Heating and Air Conditioning; People's Ready Mix; Harris Glass Co.; Murphy Masonry; Wilson Painting; Thermal Spray Insulation. The building featured a modern-day shingled front with tinted glass and a 60x83' air-conditioned showroom.

The employees that were pictured in the ad were: Owners John Turbyfill, Harold Beasley and Dave Smart; Edmere Falk, Bookkeeper (Dave's sister); Shirley Turbyfill, Secretary. Sales and service staff included Dave Miller, Sydney Turbyfill; William Fraley and Dave Hensel.

In 1978 Harold Beasley sold his interests in the store to Dave and went into the trucking business. John Turbyfill retired in 1983, making Dave the sole owner of the store. In 2019, after 52 years in business Dave decided to close the business and retire.

"I had always said that I would never retire but because of health issues now is the time," Dave told a *Newton County Enterprise* reporter in an article that appeared announcing the store closing.

It continued, "In 2017 Dave battled with cancer, which is now in remission, had two bouts of pneumonia, and suffered a stroke a year ago that left him in a coma for 12 days.

"My family has been after me to retire, and I guess they finally convinced me. If my health was ok, I would continue to stay in business. I enjoyed every minute of business here in Kentland. I love the customers and I learned if you treat them right, they will treat you right.

"I have so many memories here," added Dave. My entire family grew up here. It is defi-

**Home Furnishing's Inc.**

**Opening December 2, 1968**

U.S. 24 West Kentland, Indiana

**RCA Color TV**

**RCA Whirlpool Appliance Furniture**

Special purchases on small Sunbeam appliances for Christmas gifts

We service what we sell

Factory trained servicemen with 11 years experience.

Phone 474-6339

**John Turbyfill Mgr.**

Harold Beasley & David Smart Service Men

nately bittersweet. I appreciate the support of every single citizen of this town and area. It has been a privilege to serve them while having fun in the process. I had a lot of people come into the store recently just to thank me, and that means so much to me."

Smart also said that his wife, sons, and daughter helped him a lot throughout his health issues. "I wouldn't be here right now without them," Dave said."

### A Man Who Couldn't Sit Still

Dave was a busy man in his store, but he still made time to be a part of the community. Volunteering in the local Little League and Boy Scout organizations. He was re-elected to serve on the Kentland Town Council for over two decades serving several years as the President.

Moving forward on projects that would improve the quality of life for the residents of Kentland was top on the council's agenda and during Dave's tenure many improvements and accomplishments were attained. Improved streets, water and sewage plants, updating the Community Center; establishing and improving new town parks are just a few of the positive moves made by the council during Dave's tenure on the council.

### A Fitting Tribute

"We all here have one thing in common and it is the great Town of Kentland that we all love" - Dave Smart, 2019.

Dave's active role in the development of Kentland during his business years was recognized during the dedication of the new pond at Cast Park. It was officially named Dave's Pond - a surprise for him. Dave told me that with the help of Rich Miller the pond became a reality. An article from the *Newton County Enterprise* about the ceremony gives us a bit of history on the pond:

"Several years ago, I remembered Dave's commitment that went into building and planning this pond," said Mike Rowe, Kentland Town Council member.

"It was a mutual agreement that Dave took on personally to help knock out two projects at once. The Methodist church



Dave Smart's family ca. 1964, l-r: father Todd, mother Edmere, sisters Edmere and Sandy, brother Richard and Dave.

wanted to build a new home and Dave wanted a pond, so when you want something to happen, you get involved, and that is exactly what Dave did. He took the time from the designing stage through the building stage so it could be so much more than just a body of water. He made sure it was built with a purpose in mind to allow it to be safe for the public, to be fished and provide memories for many kids as they spend time out here on the banks trying to catch 'that big one.' This is one of the most walked areas in town and now as each resident walks around this pond, they will be reminded of the great man that we still have with us today.”

“With the help of Smart’s vision, the pond was formed with some shelving to allow spawning and was stocked with a Midwest blend of fish several years ago. It also has an aeration system that provides oxygen from the ground up. The pond at Cast Park is one of the most recognizable features of the popular park.”

Dave told me that the best part of all these years was being surrounded by his family. Growing up in a neighborhood where you had backyard barbecues, played volleyball and watched your children grow into adults.

I still have the miniature “hope” chest that was a gift from Home Furnishings when I graduated from high school - and have many pieces of furniture in my home from Home Furnishings. The community will miss the store - but Dave will still be around - taking in life from his farm in Jackson Township - and maybe he'll take a bit of time to “catch the big one” in Dave’s Pond this summer.



Home Furnishing building in 1969.



John Turbyfill  
Owner 1969

Harold Beasley  
Owner 1969

Dave Smart  
Owner 1969



Shirley Turbyfill  
Secretary 1969

Sydney Turbyfill  
Sales/Service 1969

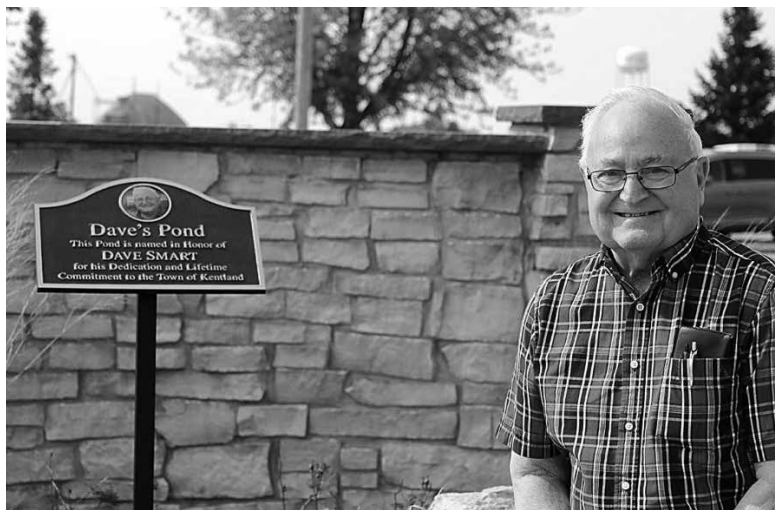
Edmere Falk  
Bookkeeper, 1969



Dave Miller  
Sales/Service 1969

William Fraley  
Sales/Service 1969

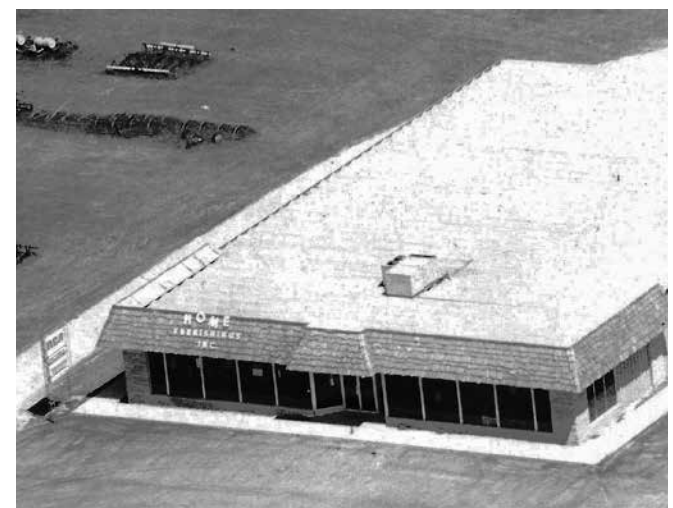
Dave Hensel  
Sales/Service 1969



In 2019 the newly construction pond at Cast Park in Kentland was designated as Dave’s Pond.



Golf Cart Club, l-r: Russ Collins, Harley Clark, Don Whaley, Ron Norris, Dave Miller, Dave Smart, Harry Basan, Pete Sell and Steve Morgan. ca.1968.



Home Furnishing building with signage in 1970s located west of Kentland on U. S. 24.

# Salt: Barones Tied to Lake Village

by Jeff Manes - Originally published October 2002

*"I got a quarter-tank of gas and a loaf of bread at the local service station the other day and tried to pay for it with a \$100 bill. The attendant behind the counter refused to accept it, saying it was no good. I asked her, 'Why not?' She said 'It's not enough.'" - Author Unknown*

Tony Barone is an entrepreneur and outdoorsman, but I would've interviewed him just because his delightfully ethnic name rhymes.

Barone, 61, lives in Lake Village and has been married to Melody for 30 years; they've raised two sons, Kurt and Kyle.

Tony has a kid brother, Stephen, who lives in Florida. In grade school, Stephen's nickname was "Fuzz" because the little shaver could grow a full beard at the age of seven. Since the 1940s, the Barone family has operated a service station in Lake Village. The place was completely remodeled in 1989, which included the addition of four booths. That is where Tony's regulars convene about 9 each morning.

More trophy bucks have been shot and more world record large-mouths have been caught in those four booths than any other spot on the face of the earth.

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*High School?*

"I was part of the first class to graduate from North Newton in 1968,"

*College?*

"Marycrest Business College in Kankakee, Illinois."

*Tony, I remember you playing softball for the Lake Village Mudders when you were in your 20s; the Mudders were the best team around. You were a natural left-handed-hitting shortstop.*

"Yeah, we had Eddie Bushman, Barney Belt, Ron Wilson, Davie Smart, Bud Spillars, Larry Schoon, Bedford Hyde, Frankie Fierito ..."

*Frankie was a pallbearer for my Grandpa Vito. Years later, he drowned while duck hunting in Cedar lake. Fierito could sure hit a softball.*

"Frankie and Your Uncle Richie were always tight."

*Tony, let's switch gears. You've been deer hunting since the mid-70's.*

"Yes, I've been very fortunate. I have a good place to hunt and I've tagged at least one deer every season since I've started."

*How did your family end up in Lake Village?*

"My Grandpa Barone emigrated from Italy to Chicago. After my father got out of the service at the end of World War II, he went into business here with his dad. I'm really not sure how they discovered Lake Village."

*You say they went into business "here," but*

*the original station wasn't at Indiana 10 and U.S. 41*

"Correct, the old station, garage and restaurant were east of here at Indiana 10 and Old 41. The newer building we're sitting it was built in 1959, and (we) moved (it) here in 1962."

*It was a case of survival on your dad's part; if he had stayed on Old 41, he never would have made it.*

"That's right."

*Did your dad also purchase the Fireside Inn, next door in '62?*

"Yes, the Hooks family operates it today."

*Tony, during one of the steel strikes of the 1950s, your dad hired my dad. Heck, I worked here when I was 15 or 16 when it was Phil's Truckstop.*

"Yeah, back in the early '70s, customers could still pull up to the pump, and we'd ask them if they wanted regular or ethyl. Then, we'd clean their windshields, check their oil and put air in their tires if needed."

*The tough part for me was trying to subtract the sales tax. If someone asked for \$6 worth, you'd only pump \$5.82 - something like that.*

"Basically, the old gas stations providing service are a thing of the past. We're convenience stores now; everything is specialty. If someone wants their oil changed, they go someplace like Oil Express. If they need a tune-up, they go to the dealership."

*You probably make more money off of groceries than you do gasoline.*

"Absolutely."

*When my dad complained to you a few years ago about the price of Twinkies or a Snickers bar, what would you tell him?*

"I'd say, 'Jimmy, I have a son who wants to attend Harvard, and the other one wants to go to Yale.'"

*Your family has changed brands over the years.*

"Dad and Grandpa Barone started out with Shell; when Dad moved the station in '62, it was still

a Shell station. Then, it went to Sinclair; Sinclair got bought out by Arco. And then we went to Union 76, and then we were Phillips 66, and then we were Mo-



**Continuing the tradition: Tony Barone, 61, is the third generation to operate the service-station business his grandfather and father opened in the 1940s in Lake Village.**

*bil."*

*What's the shingle read this month?*

"We're unbranded now."

*What's the lowest price you can remember for a gallon of gas?*

"I can remember 29.9 cents per gallon for regular from about 1959 to '61."

*Tony, it never has ceased to amaze me, when gas prices are, say, \$3.99.9, customers say they paid \$3.99 for gas. When in reality, they paid an eyelash under \$4.*

"It's always been .9; don't ask me why."

*Most of the earliest settlers of Lake Village were Danish farmers. But the hard-working Barone family has been around for four generations.*

\*\*\*

Phil Barone, Tony's father, is deceased. So is his mother, Elena, who was a registered nurse. Phil was known to work at the station 24 hours a day; he had a cot in the back where he'd nap.

Tony has worked at the station since grade school. For now, Kurt and Kyle have chosen other career paths.

It's hard to imagine the place not being operated by a Barone. To me, it always will be Phil's Truckstop.

"Fill'er up, kid."

"Yes, sir. Let me get that windshield."



**Looking back: The Barone service station as it looked in the early 1960s, before it was moved to its current location at U.S. 41 and Indiana 10 in Lake Village. It was built in 1959 at Old 41 and Indiana 10.**



## Historian's Corner

By Diana Elijah,  
Newton County Historian

### What Became of My Dad?

My mother, Mabel Lash wrote this article for my Grandfather Brandon R. Lash, after much research which included travel and letter writing. Mom sent the article to *Reader's Digest*, but because she used actual names, they refused to print it. So, I am using Grandpa's name and his adopted parent's name. To protect the innocent - so to speak.

"I was so tired I could have died that day in late May of 1898.

"We were a train load of children that had been sent West from the East Coast. Several were from the orphanage where I had been.

"Twenty-four other orphans in the Methodist Church in Bluffton, Indiana, waited for someone to say they wanted them.

"I am sure now as I think back, that the other twenty-four were as tired as I was; frightened and lonely. How many days our trip lasted I don't remember, but we sang and played our band for many people on our way west. Rev. Cooper, our band leader from the home was good to us, but firm was with us too.

"When my feelings were low as they could get, a slender, dark-headed man with a mustache and wearing a neat dark suit came in and studied all of us. All of a sudden, he was standing near me and saying, 'Would you like to come home with me?'

"I had little choice, but at once felt much better. I felt anything was better than this hard bench and I would love a nice good bed to sleep on.

"He told me he was Charles H. Lash and his wife was Anna (Keifer) Lash. He said he had no children and would like to have a son.

"When I went out with him, I was inwardly excited. There was a spring wagon with a horse hitched to it and empty strawberry boxes and crates in the back.

"The ride of about six miles to the 60-acre farm that was to become my home was heaven to a city boy, my dreams soared as we went along.

"We stopped at almost every farmhouse on the way to tell the neighbors they were getting a boy. We arrived at a white house at the end of a 1/2 mile lane. Neighboring houses were in view but not nearby.

"There, a kind, chubby woman met us and at once I loved her.

"She proved to be a real mother to me and was very nice and very wise in the simple truths of a good life.

"My adopted father raised small fruits, had a good garden, hogs, a cow, chickens, an orchard and all the needed comforts of a small farm.

"I liked the horse best. Later I was allowed to hunt and today I still enjoy hunting and fishing.

"Later, Charles and Anna Lash adopted me, and I assumed the added name of Lash. My daughter Jean learned from Bluffton, Indiana papers that fourteen children were adopted in our area.

"I remembered my own mother well and her death from Tuberculosis where we lived on the East Coast.

"I remember my (birth) father was a doctor. He suddenly went away, and I never saw him again. I learned many years later what became of him. At that time, I wondered why he never came for me when my mother died.

"My oldest son Charles and his wife Mabel took me back to the East Coast in August of 1966. After we found hotel rooms we started downtown for a late supper. About one block before we reached the restaurant I stopped and pointed to a brick building across the street and said, 'That is where my Dad had his Doctor's office. He and my mother quarreled in front of it and I never saw my Dad again.'

"The next morning, we went to the Clerk's office to get my birth certificate. There was none. We asked for a death certificate for my mother. We get it but learn that my real name was Lewis Andrew R\_\_\_, my birthday is September 12, 1889 instead of August 3, 1888, as I had always believed. Now I know why I had trouble getting a birth certificate years ago.

"We went to the big city cemetery and found my mother's grave. Whoever had the stone put up only listed her first name and daughter of \_\_. My mother's family apparently didn't want the world to know that I existed.

"On my birth certificate Dad's residence was listed as "JAIL" in the city where we lived. I was born in what was called "House of Mercy," now the city General Hospital.

"The city directory in 1887 listed my Dad in practice in a place he never had a medical practice and was never there. Every time I tried to find any information about my Dad, the orphanage referred me to a large city close by. They would contact the Uncle that put me in the orphanage, and he would stop any answers to my questions.

"I remember my guardian uncle as a "slick character. When my mother died, I heard him tell his wife, 'If we get rid of that brat we can have it all.'

"I was big enough to know no-one wanted me and I was unhappy when he took me back to the orphanage. What I didn't know was that he entered me under the wrong name and birth date.

"I believe I was called Brandon, my Dad's name to avoid confusion with the Uncle I was named for.

"I know now that my Mother's Dad died

in October 1895; mother died July of 1896 and her mother died November 1896. Their deaths left an estate to my two uncles and me.

"I received \$40.00 in the mail when my son Charles was two years old. I could never find out where it came from or how much I never received what should have been mine.

"I was told my Dad left before I was born and was never seen again. I could remember him, so I knew that I was being lied to for some reason.

"My daughter-in-law Mabel has done most of the research on the facts, which I appreciate. My mother's people have implied that my Dad was a quack. I resented this and still resent their implications.

"I knew that as late as 1908 that half of the city doctors were graduates of medical schools. In July 1889, an armed woman walked into my Dad's office and forced him to perform an abortion on the woman she had with her. Both my Dad and the armed woman were arrested, the woman was put under bail and the doctor went to jail.

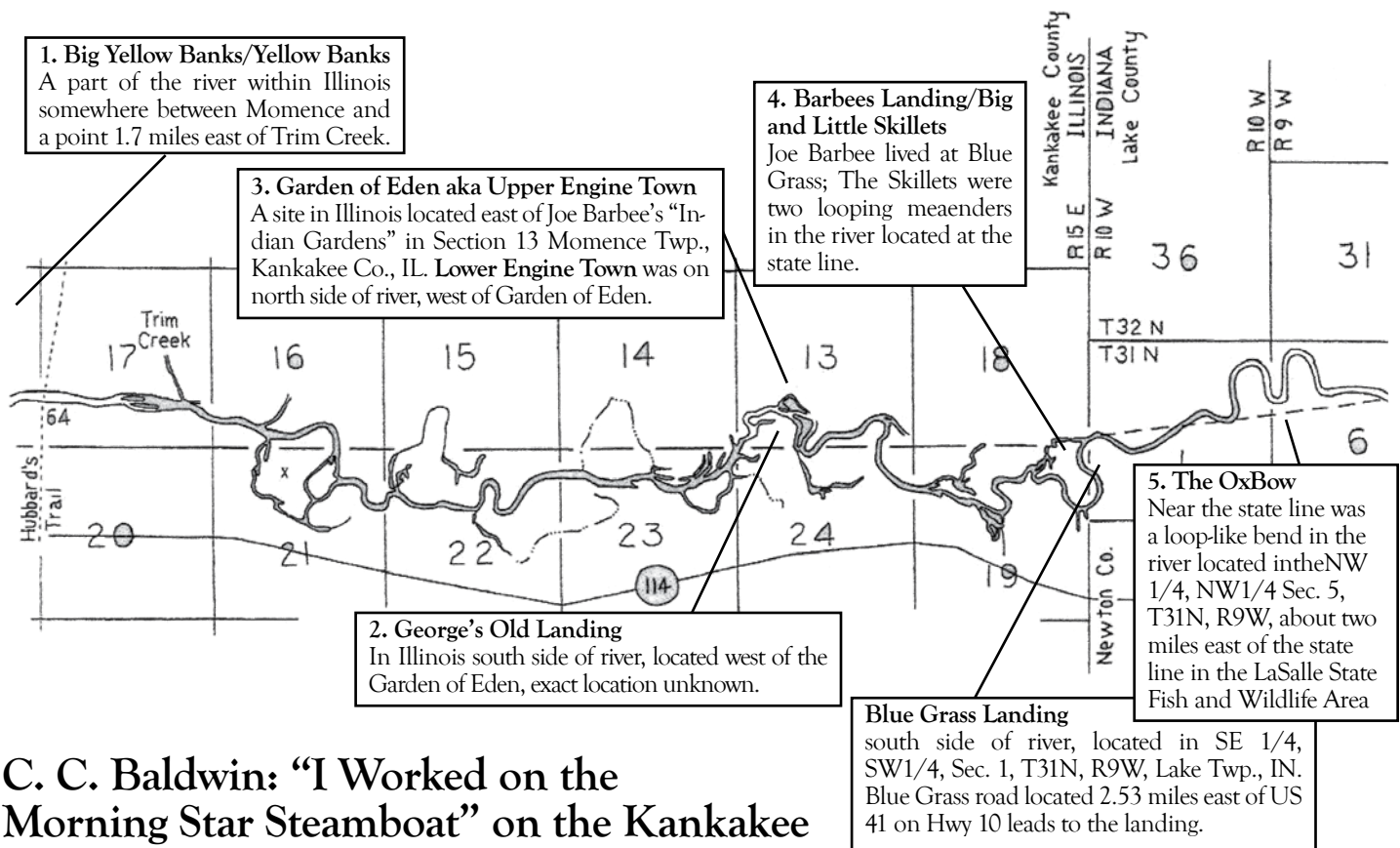
"In January my Dad was tried and sentenced to four years of hard labor in prison. The armed woman's case was postponed three times and dismissed, her bond money returned to her. I always feel my dad was "framed" with intent to ruin.

"We learned that my Dad was born on the East Coast in 1839. He graduated in 1877 from the Philadelphia School of Medicine and Surgery. I have the names of the graduates from the class. The school closed 1889-90. He practiced medicine for 24 years, got his license to practice in Connecticut in 1893. Ten years of the 24 were in New Hampshire. He is listed in the AMA records as being in Connecticut in 1896, so he was better trained than most doctors at the time. His Connecticut license listed a different address than the previous one. There had been several doctors with the same last name in that Connecticut town beginning in 1847. I think he didn't want publicity because of his previous legal problems. The information I have are documented facts.

"I know from records he was married and separated before he married my mother. I was their only child. He married a woman from New Hampshire in 1894. I don't know if they had any children.

"I married young, raised two sons, four daughters, one granddaughter. I was a molder in a steel foundry for 26 years. I am an advertisement salesman and part-time produce farmer. I inherited that 60 acres I was raised on and the farm continues to be my home.

"My wife, Pearl Lash, died five years ago. Her family was very loyal, but I did not have a single relative except my children. I would very much like to know who my ancestors were, especially grandparents, and where my Dad was buried."



## C. C. Baldwin: "I Worked on the Morning Star Steamboat" on the Kankakee

The following article originally appeared in the Momence Progress Reporter in 1984 written by Kay Hess. It was reprinted beginning on page 70 in the "History of Roselawn, Thayer and Shelby - The First 100 Years: 1882-1982." The narrator was C. C. Baldwin who worked on the steamboats in the years 1877 and 1878 in the Momence area.

"I don't think that any of the present generation knows that at one time steamboats plied the river above Momence. There were four steamboats here at one time back in 1877 and '78. I can give a pretty good history of all those boats as I have ridden on all of them. I worked one summer helping to run one of them.

"The names of those boats were the Morning Star, the oldest of all which was owned by my brother Henry Baldwin. It was a side-wheeler, 45'x10' and drew about 22" of water. The width of the deck from side to side was 16'. It had a long rudder, which made it good for this very crooked river (Kankakee); Dew Drop, which was owned by the Eugene Ice Company, 40' long and was used for trips up the river for outings and camping. It was a stern wheeler; the Union Club, built by a business men's club of Momence; Little Red Bird, built and owned by Sid Vail, 30'x6' with a metal hull, well designed and had a screw propeller. These were all steam boats. Gasoline launches were not known in those days.

"The Morning Star was built in English

Lake. (Ed. Note: built in 1866 by the company Bissell and Cornell for freight purposes.) It changed hands many times during its lifetime. When my brother owned the boat, I was engineer and fireman, combined one summer, so I know from experience. Our freight boat was 60' long, 12' wide and 36" deep. Our freight consisted of cord wood, fence posts, lumber and rock. The crew consisted of four men: Capt. LeCour, Steamboat Pilot Cal Hayes, Flat Boat Pilot Ben Sprague, and Chief Engineer and Fireman, C. C Baldwin.

"The boat had four bunks which we could put up or let down. We used to take provisions which should have lasted three or four days, but we frequently ran out and would have to buy our meals somewhere along the line. We could make our coffee on the boat from the boiler, but our grub used to be chiefly bread and butter. It tasted good in those days. Water was plentiful and safe in the river then. We knew nothing of any riffles or obstructions to bother us, and we surely had good times with some tough luck mixed in with it.

"Our boating fun was between here (Momence) and Thayer's Landing where the Monon crosses the river now in Indiana. To make Thayer's Landing with our boat empty was a good day's run. The old river was a very crooked stream in those days, but I suppose it is straighter now.

"That spring we used to run the old river

which went by **Yellow Banks, Little Yellow Banks (1)**, but later in the summer we used to go through the Jones Cut-off, which cut off 2.5 miles, but the water was very swift going through it. Going up the river from here I will give some of our boat landings. The first landing was **George Old's Landing (2)** that was on the south shore of the river. The second landing was the **Lower Engine Town and Upper Engine Town** on the north side of the river Upper Engine Town was where Dan Parmalee lived, now called the **Garden of Eden (3)**. I have eaten many meals there. It was an interesting stop there because of the large and interesting collection of Indian relics Dan had.

"The next place was **Barbee's Landing (4)** on the north bank of the river. In the locality were the two skillet - **Big and Little Skillet (4)**. The skillets were on the order of a peninsula with a small neck of land, which I suppose caused the name. The **Ox-Bow (5)**, so called to me like it had once been a skillet- had been cut through the "handle" and cut off the bow part.

"The next landing was for what we called **White Oak (6)** on the south bank of the river. That was the landing for Lake Village. I'll never forget when we landed at White Oak one night and we had in the flat boat a shipment of household goods and in the lot was a crate of chickens. One of the chickens died and Cal Hays dressed it out so it wouldn't go



Could this be the Morning Star? We will never know, but it is an example of a steamboat moving logs along the Kankakee. From the "History of Roselawn, Thayer and Shelby, the First 100 Years, 1882-1982."

**7. Thayer's Landing**  
3.7 miles northwest of Blue Grass, 9.95 miles dues east of the state line. Originally known as Harrison's Landing.



**6. White Oak Landing**  
South side of the river. In the center of N 1/2, Sec. 3, T31N, R9W, about 1/2 mile east of what is now the US 41 bridge over the river. **White Oak Island** south of river west of US 41 on the north side of the road leading into the LaSalle State Fish and Wildlife Area.

Location references were made by authors Hess, Burroughs, Wallace and Bower, Weirch. Reported in the Chicago Portage Ledger, Vol 9, #1, Phillip Verling, 2008. This document includes a directory to all of the known names of sites along the entire Kankakee River. You can access the entire document via the internet.

to waste. He had a new jackknife and by accident he threw his new knife overboard with the chicken offal. That evened up things.

"Our next stop was a wagon bridge built up on pilings. At the end of the bridge we had to get off our boats and open the draw with a bar then run our boat through and pinch the draw back in again so teams could cross the bridge. Our flatboat could go under the bridge without opening the draw. On leaving Blue Grass Landing going up river there were so-called Three-Rivers. One was the Huntley, the other the New River and the third the Old River. They all came together again about a mile up. He could run all three of these rivers.

"The last stop was **Thayer's Landing (7)** where we got most of our freight for Momence - usually block wood and posts. If we got there at night we could put on part of a load and finish in the morning. All the crew helped load and unload.

"In going up-river we did not have to pilot for the flatboat, but going down-river he was a busy man when we were going around the bends. We towed the flat boat with a long rope.

"One trip coming down with a load of white oak fence posts, about 2,000 of them for Ben Slater, things went pretty well until we reached the Ox-Bow coming through the Key-Hole where the Ox-Bow was cut off.

"In closing I will add a few words about rafting. There are lots of people who have never seen a raft. A raft-man's outfit was a small boat and cooking utensils and possibly a small tent, an ax, awl, and an auger. The rafts those

days were always put together with pins. By putting a pole across 10 or 12 logs a crib was formed. I have seen five or six of these cribs all fastened together in one raft floating down the river. If the water was falling in the river the raft-man had an easy time, as his raft would run to the center of the stream. But if the water was rising the raft would hug the bank and he would have trouble. The raft-man got his timber those days where it was handiest for him to fell the logs into the river to build his cribs. Timber was used to belong in those days to anyone who saw fit to cut it down, regardless of who owned the land.

"We used to estimate the current of the river at four miles an hour, but I think we were

high. Up-river a few miles from here is a place called Parrish's Ruin, where Mr. Parrish on a raft went under some overhanging trees that caused his raft to sink. He clung to some trees and hollered he was ruined.

"An old rafts-man of those days was Peter Brassard. Sometimes he would put his raft to our boat ad ride up-river with us."

Just how long the Morning Star remained in the freight business is unknown, but with the location of "the falls" at Momence and the Monon railroad trestle at Thayer's Landing limited their area of trade business. Other historians have noted the Morning Star as being utilized as an excursion-pleasure boat.



This photograph is of the Union Club Steamboat that at one time could be seen along the banks of the Kankakee - a fine example of steamboats from back in the day.

# Commercialized Lumbering Along the Old Kankakee River

Submitted by Beth Bassett

Fay Folsom Nichols' account of commercialized lumbering appears in Chapter 18 of her book "The Kankakee" entitled "The Tragedy of the Trees." She prefaced the chapter this way: "Few stories that have come out of the river can equal that of the wanton and wasteful slaughter of the trees along its banks. Probably none can surpass the narrative." I share it here for the historical aspect of the era.

"Most islands throughout the marshland tracts were covered with heavy timber in various ages and stages of growth. In that particular area that winds along from English Lake (Starke County), south to the State line, the wooded sections extended back several miles on each side of the stream.

"For long years during the winter months, "swamping" was a regular business. Choppers went into the swamps after the first hard freeze. From then on until the spring thaws made it unsafe for men and teams with huge sled loads of logs to cross on the ice, the clang of the axe and crash of falling tree echoed the length of and breadth of the marshes.

"The year's supply of firewood for all residents for miles around, came out at this time. Rails were split from the white oak to go into long lines of fencing across the farmer's fields. The use of coal or oil for heating purposes was an unheard of extravagance, and wire fencing yet to come. Many of the more prosperous people of the villages and families in the farming communities without timber on their land, bought small tracts of swamp land, usually from ten to twenty acres, just for the wood upon it.

"The buying and selling of chunk and split wood became a major industry. Experienced choppers were paid top wages and dealers were often permitted to take wood from large acreage that the owners of the land might have it cleared for grazing and farming purposes. Business boomed.

"Before daylight on cold winter mornings, all roads leading to the swamps would be lined with men and teams, many of them coming great distances. The men would be as warmly dressed as possible in heavy woolen clothing. Their feet would be encased in felt boots inside rubber ones. Then, wrapped in heavy blankets or old patch-work comforters, they would ride the front runners of the empty bob sleds, the sharp-shod teams trotting briskly along in sub-zero temperatures. Each swamper was anxious to be at the timberline by daybreak.

"During the day teamsters would haul several loads of logs across the ice to the landings - places at the edge of the marshes, where they would pile them to be hauled out later. Usually swampers respected the rights of others and these piles of wood would be quite safe until the rightful owner had time to haul them home.

"Each evening a teamster would bring out as much wood as he could possibly pile onto the runners of his sled, with tall wooden

stakes set to hold the now priceless hardwood. Teams had all they could do to pull the heavy loads. The men walked beside the slowly moving sleds, intermittently swinging their arms as they walked trying to keep warm, or beating mittened hands together to restore circulation in cold-stiffening fingers.

"By February, particularly if there had been a January thaw, everyone was hoping the groundhog would see his shadow and scuttle back into his burrow for another six-week snooze. Plenty of freezing weather and snow assured a big woodpile.

"Neighbor exchanged work with neighbor, and exciting was the day when the sawyer arrived with its traction engine and buzz saw. Then the great piles of cut timber that had been growing in a corner of the wood-lot, would be attacked. By night it had been converted into a greater pile of chunk wood.

"Later the larger chunks were sorted out for the large, round-bellied heaters and parlor stoves. The smaller pieces were split into slick, shining sticks for the cook stove. Picking up chips and bark became the job of the youngsters whether they liked it or not. For chips were kindling that hastened the boiling of father's breakfast coffee, and brought the big pancake griddle on the baking point in double-quick time.

"Avaricious and thoughtless men were the direct cause of the depletion of this timber. From the very beginning of the white man's settlement, no one gave thought or heed to future wood and lumber needs, nor its conservation. Those who did were ridiculed and derided.

"Why, wood here would last out several generations! They'd never be able to use up all the timber along the river! Silly of anyone to entertain such a thought!

"But fierce fall fires became a strong contributing factor toward depletion, and with heedless chopping, there was quick and sure exhaustion.

"Lumbering could not be thought of as a river industry - at least not a lasting one. True, many trees felled were so large that only with the greatest of effort on the part of several sturdy woodsmen, could they be rolled upon and changed to low sled runners. These were sawed into bridge planking, and the roughest of sills and flooring for barns and other farm buildings. Finishing lumber for homes, churches and schools was "imported" from the great lumbering regions

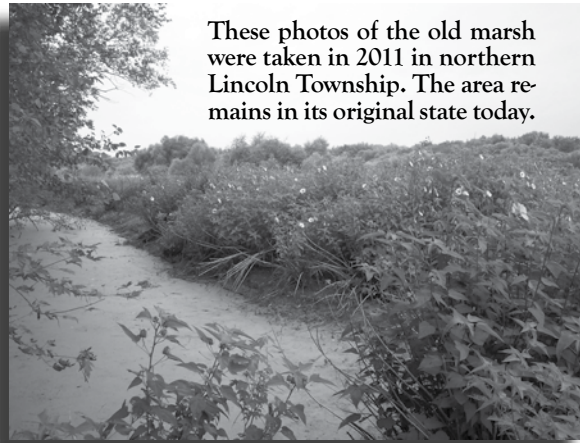
of Michigan, Wisconsin and Minnesota.

"In 1866 the Indian Island Saw Mill company was formed, with a group of South Porter county men taking stock at \$100 a share.

"During the winter, when everything was frozen, they moved in their equipment and saw mill, and a master boat builder went with his business of building heavy scows thirty feet long and 10 feet wide.

By spring the company was all set to operate and enough trees had been felled that work started in earnest. But they were faced with a problem - how to get the big scows up to the island. Finally a canal fifteen feet wide and three deep was dug, extending from the island to the River.

"The sawed lumber and cordwood was to be taken down the stream as far as Momence, unloaded enroute wherever there was a demand for it. But moving the barges, each loaded with seventy-five



**These photos of the old marsh were taken in 2011 in northern Lincoln Township. The area remains in its original state today.**



cords of wood, was no easy job, even for the hardest of men. So within two years of the heaviest seasons, stockholders had built and launched the White Star, said to have been the first steamboat on the River.

"The White Star's maiden voyage was a success, and her huge paddle wheel threw water in tune to the men's cheers. For several trips the little steamer pulled the barges, but this wasn't working so well. They were continually sticking to the numerous sand bars, or alternately bumping to the sides of the mucky banks. Someone hit upon the idea of pushing the scows, with men riding the prow and steering with long poles. In this manner the down journeys were made with a minimum amount of trouble.

"It took a day and a half to make the trip to Mومence. With the building of the Monon railroad across the River near Shelby, the business had to be abandoned because The White Star could not go under the bridge. Anyway, the timber was well cut over, and the lumber and wood business dwindling, so the steamer was sold to Mومence men and put on the lower Kankakee as a pleasure boat."

### The Great Slaughter

"The real slaughter of the trees began in 1907. A Chicago furniture manufacturing company bought up all available standing timber on these lands with plans to have it taken down the river to Water Valley (Shelby) and there loaded on flat cars for shipment to Chicago.

"Here were not scrub oak. Tall, big-bodied hardwoods crowned the islands and crowded the river's banks. The Chicago firm tackled the job in a big way. In the shortest possible time trees were to become boards in drying kilns.

"The managers, spurning advice and help of local men who knew the nature of the swamp - the whims of the Kankakee - brought in "experienced" woodsmen from Kentucky. The Kentuckians arrived almost overnight, bringing with them seasoned oxen and low-swung axles on sturdy logging wagons. Never had such an industry come to

the river. Excitement ran high.

"Scorers marked the trees. Under the axes and crosscut saws, as powerful woodsmen buried them into the trees, great white and red oaks began to fall. Giant yellow poplars, smooth, big bodied beech and lacy elms were downed. The shining, gray-green trunks of beautiful sycamores lay naked and stripped of their branches. White birch that had struggled to reach the sunlight among close-crowding ash and maples suffered the penalty of having grown tall and straight.

"The noise of the men and their labors carried out over the countryside. People came from miles around to witness the slaughter, to clasp their hands and to weep at the absolute destruction of that which they had enjoyed and admired for years.

"Oxen bellowed as they struggled through the miry sloughs. Trees spread out their rooty toes as though to top or hold back the carnage. Bullwhackers cursed and "gee-hawed," goading the stubborn brutes to the water's edge their rod-long shots of tobacco juice floated down stream with the gurgle from jugs of Kentucky moonshine.

"The steersmen brought from Kentucky were supposed to be master craftsmen in the art of log rafting. But they had served apprenticeship in the swift, rock-bottomed streams and rivers of the native state. They couldn't bargain with the twists and turns of the Kankakee, its sand bars and unpredictable bayous.

"Their rafts were clumsy contraptions, with too many heavy logs to float well. The elm and oak were sinkers. Instead of laying them with the stream, using plenty of floaters such as ash, maple and birch, the rafts were fashioned in the opposite manner.

"Cribbing the logs meant tying sixteen logs together. Forty cribs made a raft.

"The steersmen encountered their first trouble at Windy Bend, a turn not far from Baum's Bridge. If the wind arose suddenly, as it sometimes does along the river, no matter how strong the language, nor handy the piker was with his peavey (an iron pointed lever with an iron hook on the other end) the raft usually upended here, and was gradually sucked into the greedy sand below the water.

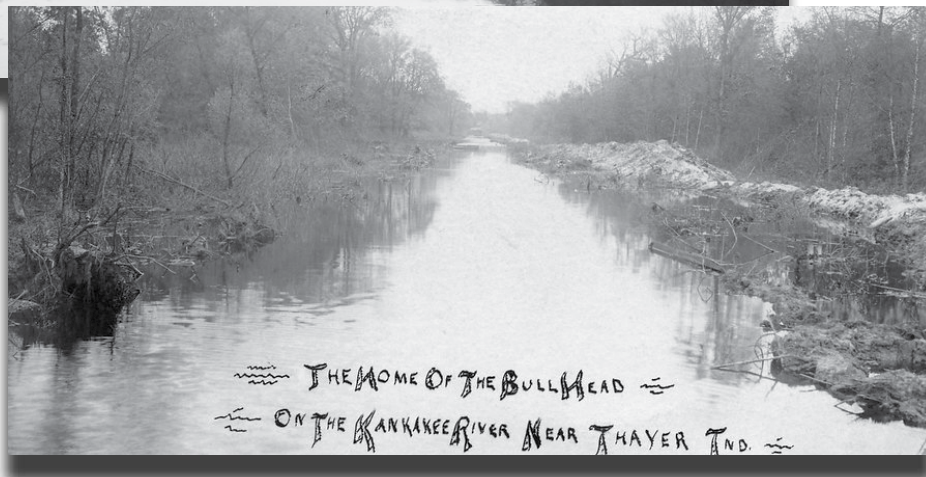
"In desperation local river men were consulted, and big bosses listened. Rafts were rebuilt with the heavier logs laid with the stream, and more floaters added to each raft. Two rafts were chained, end to end, for the down journey. Thus when the first raft struck a sand bar, the second was swung sharply across the swift current. This jerked the first raft off, setting it again in motion downstream.

"These local men knew the temperamental river. If the wind fouled their attempt to negotiate Windy Bend, they "snubbed" the raft until weather settled - tying up to trees along the banks with ropes."

Mrs. Nichols' narration leaves this subject here. I so much appreciate her including it in her book as it gives the reader a vivid depiction of life along the Kankakee River in our area. -Editor



Top photo: 2011 the Kankakee in northern Lincoln Township near Indian Gardens. Dense stands of trees once again can be seen along banks.



Bottom: A 1910 postcard of the Kankakee River near Thayer - it looks like the dredge has made a pass through at least once.

# Home is Where Your Story Begins

Bridgeman/Lowe Families of Beaver Township, submitted by Dennis Boyd

## The Bridgeman Family

Samuel Bridgeman was born in Lancaster, Ohio on July 6, 1815. He was the son of Michael Bridgeman (1790-1870) who was born in Pennsylvania and Mary M. Keeley (1790-1849) who was born in Virginia. Sometime after their marriage, Samuel's parents migrated to Ohio.

In the early years of Samuel's life, he moved to Harrison County, Indiana and lived there around 13 years. He then moved to Coal Creek in Fountain County, Indiana living there for four years. After another five years in Logansport, Indiana he moved to Newton County near Morocco in 1840 where he lived the rest of his life.

Samuel married Lavina Murphey in 1842 in Newton County and they had nine children in 16 years. Lavina died on March 10, 1887 at the farm at the age of 69. Sometime, thereafter, Samuel remarried.

The nine children Samuel and Lavina had together included five daughters and four sons. Their children provided them with 27 grandchildren over the years.

Samuel and Lavina's children were - Sarah Jane (1843-1934), Lydia Anne (1845-1912), Nancy E. (1847-1929), John (1849-1893), Michael (1851-1901), Samuel E. (1854-1940), and twins Alonzo 1856-1929) and Alzoria (1856-1934) and Mary Catherine (1860-1945).

Sarah Jane married Samuel J. Deardurff (1844-1929) in 1868. They had three children. Sarah died in Morocco on Feb 26, 1934 at the age of 90.

Lydia Anne Bridgeman was born in Morocco, on February 8, 1845. She married Christian Cyrus Deardurff (1840-1903) on April 25, 1865 in Newton County. They had five children in 14 years.

Lydia died on October 23, 1912 in Kentland and is buried in Morocco, Christian passed away on November 23, 1903 and is buried with her.

Nancy E. Bridgeman was born on March 27, 1847, in Morocco. She married Cyrus Brunton (1841-1912) on November 8, 1866, in Newton County. They had nine children in 20 years. Her husband, Cyrus, had served in the Indiana 99th during the Civil War. Cyrus died on April 4, 1912. Nancy died on October 3, 1929, in her hometown at the age of 82, and she and Cyrus are buried there.

John Bridgeman was born on April 16, 1849 in Newton County. He married Eunice Flora James from Monticello (1853-1917) on

March 9, 1872, in Newton, Indiana. They had two children during their marriage. For a short time, John and Eunice moved to Island Grove in Sangamon County, Illinois, but later returned to Newton County. John passed away on December 4, 1893 and Eunice died in 1917. They are buried at the Oakland Cemetery near Morocco.

Michael Bridgeman was born May 21, 1851 in Newton County. He married Rosetta "Ettie" Goodale on April 26, 1885 and they had one child during their marriage. Ettie died as a young mother on January 6, 1894, at the age of 31 and is buried in the Murphy Cemetery in Morocco. Michael died on March 22, 1901, in Morocco, Indiana, at the age of 50 and is buried with his wife in Morocco.

Alonzo and his twin sister Alzoria were born on September 9, 1856, in Morocco. He married Olive Jane Hooks on January 20, 1886, in Newton, Indiana. They had 15 children in 25 years. Olive passed away at the age of 80 on July 27, 1950 in Morocco at the Murphy Cemetery. The 1900 Census records show that Alonzo and Olive lived in St. Mary Village, Iroquois County in Illinois. Alonzo died on February 27, 1929, in Jackson, Indiana, at the age of 72 and is buried by his wife.

Samuel E. Bridgeman was born on January 19, 1854, in Morocco, Indiana. He was married four times and had four sons and six daughters. He died on June 15, 1940, in Newton County, Indiana, at the age of 86.

Alzoria "Allie" Lou Bridgeman and her twin brother were born on September 9, 1856, in Morocco at the Bridgeman farm She moved to Morocco and married George Ervin Lowe (1852-1939) on February 24, 1878, in Newton County. They had five children in 13 years; Ella May (1879-1904), Anna Viola (1882-1948), Rosezella Isabelle (1884-1968), Maude Christina (1886-1965) and Ina Eviena (1892-1912). George passed away on June 26, 1939. His obituary said he died from bronchial pneumonia. "Allie" passed away on Feb. 26, 1968. She and her husband are buried in the Riverside Cemetery in Brook.

Mary Catherine Bridgeman was born on August 6, 1860, in Morocco. She married William Alfred Coovert on April 23, 1896, in Newton County. They had one child during their marriage. She died on March 11, 1945, in Beaver Twp., Newton County, Indiana, at the age of 84.

Footnote: Alzoria ("Allie") and George Lowe's daughter, Rosezella "Zella", married John Merchant on Jan. 16, 1907. They had four chil-

dren; Lloyd, Alma, Eva May and Roy. One of Roy's daughters is Roslynn (Merchant) Boyd married to Dennis, the contributor of this article. "

## The Lowe Family

John Low 1712-1790 - Birth of Son Jonathan Low (1752-1818) married Abigail "Suzannah" Frost. They had one son, Jonathan Low (1752-1818) who was born on May 23,



Samuel and Sarah Jane (Bridgeman) Deardurff



Lydia Anne (Bridgeman) Deardurff Alonzo Bridgeman



Zella and John Merchant with their three granddaughters, Roslynn, Carolyn and Cheryl Merchant.

1752 in Sanford, Maine and died on May 23, 1818 in Columbia, Maine.

Jonathon Low married Susannah Gooch (1750-1820) on June 15, 1775 in Maine. They had eight children together including Enoch Low (1786-1869) who was born in Massachusetts and died on November 11, 1869 in Columbia Falls, Maine.

Enoch Low Married Susannah Nash. Enoch and Susannah had two children, Irene Ingersoll Low (1821-1890) who was born and died in Maine, and George L. Lowe (1826-1897) who was born on June 27, 1826 in Columbia Falls and later moved to Morocco, Indiana. Enoch lived a long life of 83 years, and was buried in Columbia Falls, Maine.

George L. Lowe married Christina C. Ingersoll who was born on August 4, 1827, in Maine. George and Christina had one son and two daughters between 1853 and 1866. Christina died on October 7, 1877, at the age of 50, and was buried in Morocco, Indiana.

Upon Christina's death, George remarried Minerva A. Roadruck (1837-1914) on October 7, 1879 in Newton County. George's death certificate states that he was a retired farmer and died of Bronchial Pneumonia on October 26, 1897, at the age of 71, and was buried next to his wife in Morocco.

George and Christina had four daughters; Ella M. (1879-1904), Anna Viola (1882-1948), Rosezella Isabell (1884-1968) and Maud C. (1886- ).

Ella M. Lowe was born on February 11, 1879, in Morocco. She was married on January 15, 1901 to Harry S. Irvin but there is no information if she had any children. She died on February 22, 1904, in Morocco at the age of 25.

Anna Viola (Lowe) Buckles was born June 17, 1882 in Morocco, and died April 19, 1948 in Ludington, Michigan. She was married but there is no record of her husband's first name or if she had any children.

Rosezella "Zella" Isabelle (Lowe) Merchant was born September 29, 1884 in Newton County. She married John Merchant

(1883-1964) on January 16, 1907, in Newton County and had four children. Zella suffered from severe arthritis and after her husband passed away, moved to her daughter, Eva May Hess's home. John passed away on July 2, 1964 in Morocco and is buried in Brook.

Zella died on February 26, 1968, at the age of 83, and was buried next to her husband at Riverside Cemetery in Brook. Zella and John had four children; Lloyd L. (1908-1976), Alma E. (Merchant) Furst (1915-1966), Eva May (Merchant) Hess (1919-2000) and Roy W. (1921-1984).

View more photos online of these families at [www.ingenweb.org/innewton](http://www.ingenweb.org/innewton).



Left, John and Rosezella (Lowe) Merchant; Right, George E. and Alzoria (Bridgeman) Lowe.



This picture of the graduating class of Morocco Eighth Grade in the year 1901. Back row left to right: Roy Purdy, Zella (Lowe) Merchant, Jesse Purdy, Beatrice (Deardurff) Moore, John Robertson, Bessie (Kay) Holley, Charles Sarver. Middle row; Lizzie (Robertson) Archibald, Margaret (Kessler) Spitler, Sofia (Jenson)?, Nellie (Buswell) ?, Jessie (Russell) Hunter. Front row; Carrie (Ray) Tuggle, Sybie (Templeton) Shaffer, Ora (Smart) Jones and Edward Gorman.



George Lowe

## Answers to Do You Know?

By Janet Miller - Questions on Page 15

1. Five townships reference a Presidential name. They are: Grant, Jackson, Jefferson, Lincoln and Washington. The other five townships are Beaver, Colfax, Iroquois, Lake and McClellan.
2. The Lincoln Township Volunteer Fire Department officially incorporated on December 3, 1962. They used the garage of Phil Jonkman for their first fire station.
3. Goodland is the Newton County town that holds a "Grand Prix" each summer, beginning in 2002. Former Indiana Governor Mitch Daniels served as Grand Marshal. Dillon Hall and Jim Butler, Goodland residents, initiated this event.
4. The two towns in Lincoln Township are Roselawn and Thayer. Roselawn was platted January 17, 1882 and Thayer was platted September 11, 1882.
5. The small hamlet of Pogue is located in the northwest corner of Beaver Township near the Illinois State Line. At one time this was a well-known place to ship cattle as the Chicago and Eastern Illinois Railroad ran through the town. Currently the area of Pogue is encompassed in the Willow Slough Fish and Wildlife Area, which is owned by the State of Indiana.



Fox Pelts: Pictured above are James and Nina Hayworth of Lake Village with their 101 fox pelts and one wolf pelt, for which bounty was claimed at the Newton County Auditor's office. This is the greatest number of the pelts brought in at one time by any individual in the history of Newton County. In 1968 the Hayworths brought in over 100 pelts, but at different times of the year. The state law provides that \$3.00 may be paid for a fox pelt and \$10.00 which is paid for a wolf pelt is at the discretion of the County Commissioners. Photo originally published December, 1969 in the *Newton County Enterprise*.

Save the date for the  
March Society Meeting Notice  
Please note date and time!

## What Ever Happened to Beaver Lake

Michael Dobberstein, Professor of English at Purdue University Northwest, will talk about the history and massive corruption involved in draining historic Beaver Lake.

Saturday, March 21

3:00 PM CST

Newton County

Government Center

US 41 and SR 114 Morocco

**FREE ADMISSION  
PUBLIC INVITED**


# 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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