

>> **Beaver Lake/Bogus Island Land Owners, from page 23**

more land in the area, and on July 18, 1974 he purchased about 13,000 acres from the Norris Grain Farms located about 10 miles east of Bogus Island. Karlock began clearing the sandy knobs and cleaned many of the open ditches on the Beaver Lake lands to improve drainage. He started to install pivot irrigation systems to water the sandy, poor areas of the farm.

The deed transfer records of Newton County and Jasper County show that on January 9, 1980 a deed was recorded for the transfer of about 23,000 acres from Merlin Karlock to The Prudential Insurance Company of America. The Bogus Island lands were a part of this transfer. Karlock's sale to Prudential included about 13,000 acres of the Fair Oaks farmland located in Colfax Township in Newton County.

Prudential rented the former Beaver Lake and Bogus Island crop acreages to three or four local family farmers. During ownership by Karlock and The Prudential, nothing of note happened to Bogus Island or the old shack that stood near U. S. 41. Bogus Island simply sat there along with the few weeds that grew in the yellow sand.

In 1996 Prudential determined to go from a mutual insurance company to a stock company. This decision triggered massive plans to liquidate all of Prudential's real estate holdings over a four or five-year period. Prudential's investment real estate portfolio consisted of commercial city real estate and several hundred thousand acres of agriculture lands scattered across the United States. The agriculture lands included corn and soybean farms in the Corn Belt, cotton and soybean farms in Arkansas, Mississippi and Louisiana, orange groves in Florida, vineyards and permanent plantings in California, and apples in the state of Washington.

The Fair Oaks Farm (which included Bogus Island) was placed on the market. The Nature Conservancy purchased about 7,200 acres on February 28, 1997. The purchase was primarily

funded by a grant from the Eli Lilly foundation. The purchase included the East ½ of Section 16 and all of Section 15, which were the old Beaver Lake and Bogus Island tracts originally deeded to Lemuel Milk in 1870.

The Nature Conservancy is restoring the Beaver Lake acreage back to native grasses and wetland. They cannot restore the lands back into a lake because existing highways and roads would flood.

The remaining acreage owned by Prudential and located in the Beaver Lake area was sold to area farmers, Thomas W. and Donald M. DeYoung and is planted to corn and soybeans.

Thus, after 130 years of various private individual ownerships, The Nature Conservancy and The State of Indiana now own Bogus Island and a significant portion of Beaver Lake.

The Newcomer

A publication of the Newton County Historical Society, Inc. A 501(3) c approved organization.

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The Newcomer

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What's On Our Agenda . . .

The Newton County Historical Society meets every fourth Monday of each month, on the same day, the Family History Division meets at 2:00 at the Resource Center in Kentland and the Society general meetings are held in different locations in the County at 7:00 p.m. Local members are notified of the place and time each month.

Resource Center Hours - all CDT - Monday and Thursday, 1:00-5:00; Friday 11:00-3:00, located at the junction of U.S. 24 and 4th Street, 310 E. Seymour, Kentland, Indiana.

The Newcomer

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A publication of the NEWTON COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY, INC.
Indiana's YOUNGEST County

Saga of Beaver Lake

by John J. Yost, submitted by Beth Bassett

It has been a little more than a year since the passing of our dear friend and historian, John Yost. With the Family History Division of the Newton County Historical Society in the midst of republishing Bill Bat's, The Hoosier Hunting Grounds, or the Beaver Lake Trail, it only seems fitting that we publish a bit of history of Beaver Lake written by John, that is posted on a web site in conjunction with Allen Cummings and his information regarding the area. We have published many aspects of the Beaver Lake area in *The Newcomer*, but not the subject of the draining and the record of deed transfers of Bogus Island.

Over many years, John complied and wrote about Beaver Lake, the Pottawatomie Indians, the horse thieves and counterfeiters on Bogus Island, the drainage of Beaver Lake, and the disputes over ownership in the 1800s. His descriptive history ends at about the early 1890's. John shared a copy of this saga in rough draft with me, and after reading it he told me, "One day I'll get that finished, so far it is in rough draft form – it needs a bit of editing, but feel free to use it however you wish."

Throughout the story we are publishing here, John sites his sources, those being Jasper and Newton Counties, 1916, by Hamilton and Darroch; Counties of Warren, Benton, Jasper and Newton, Indiana, 1883; Beaver Lake, Land of Enchantment, by Elmore Barce; The Newton County Enterprise and Morocco Courier.

If you would like to read John's entire "Saga of Beaver Lake," it is located on the web at: http://www.geocities.com/allenhc_2000/bogusislandhistory.htm

Chapter Five

The Death of the Lake

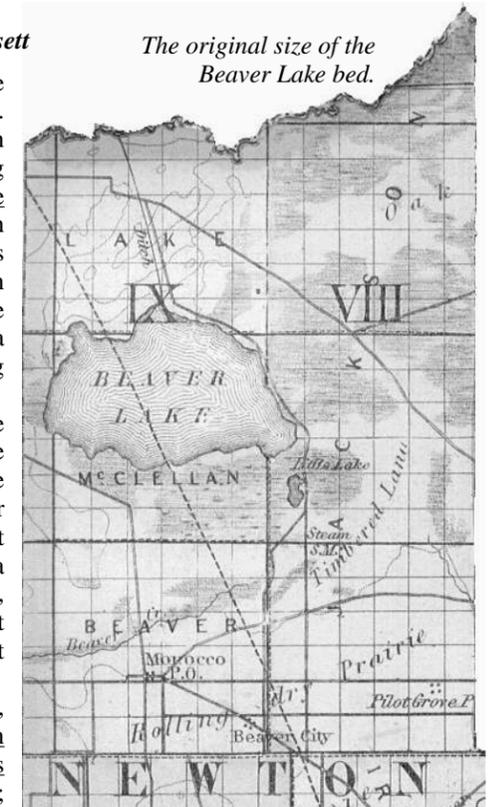
Unquestionably part of the reason Beaver Lake holds such interest for us today is because it is no more. Even standing on the shore of Murphey Lake at the Willow Slough Fish and Wildlife Area and letting one's imagination wander, it is hard to conjure up what that glorious natural wonder must have been like. Even the written record of those who experienced the lake first-hand does not do it justice. How did it come to disappear?

As the settlement of the Newton-Jasper area continued to grow in the 1850's, the state legislature adopted a law known as the Swamp Law Act. The purpose of the act was to provide a mechanism by which the swamp lands could be drained and settled. The state owned much of the swampland, and under the 1852 act, the state was empowered to sell this property. The funds generated by the sale were to be directed toward paying for the drainage of the area. In 1853 Austin M. Puett was awarded a contract to cut a drainage ditch. Puett was the grandfather of Judge William Darroch whose history of Newton County has been frequently cited in this saga.

There was no particular outlet for Beaver Lake. In times of flood it overflowed into Beaver Creek and from there drained into the Iroquois River. As recorded in Judge Darroch's history, Beaver Lake was about 35 feet higher in elevation than the Kankakee River. At its nearest point, the river was about four and one-half miles from the lake. The ditch that was dug by Austin Puett at the lake's northwest corner resulted in a lowering of the lake which left a band of the shoreline about 100 yards wide around the body of water as the lake receded.

Little more additional drainage of the lake took place until 1869. In that year the area experienced heavy rains and widespread and "incessant" flooding. The net effect of this was to wash out and enlarge

The original size of the
Beaver Lake bed.



the original ditch which, after the effects of the flood subsided, resulted in a dramatic increase in the drainage of the lake. According to Judge Darroch, in just two years, by 1871, fully three-quarters of the lake bed had been drained. In effect, Beaver Lake had shrunk from 16,000 acres of water to 4,000. John D. Sink described the period of the draining of the lake as follows, "During the years 1871-2-3-and 4, which were dry years, many people settled in the marsh country and invested their holdings in swamp lands, and when the wet seasons came from '75 to '83 there was a great many miles of ditches dug, and once the drainage was well started it continued and is still (in 1901) continuing, and in many places tile is being laid with the best of results."

The dramatic shrinkage of the lake did not immediately end the lake's appeal to the sportsman, see illustration this page. One sportsman who observed the scene as Beaver Lake and the nearby swamps of the Kankakee River marsh during this transitional phase of the lake's history was Morocco physician Dr. L. H. Recher whose office walls were filled with stuffed and mounted wildlife of the region. In 1916 Dr. Recher penned this description of the area as he found it in the mid-1860's, "Indiana, 40 years ago, was famous for the wild fowl shooting it afforded. Hunters came from all parts of the country to the Kankakee marshes and returned to their homes with good bags of wild geese, Canadian and Mexican brant, ducks of all kinds and specimens of swans, the last named for mounting.

"Indiana was a link in one of the four great flyways from the Gulf of Mexico region to the wilds of Canada, the other routes being the Mississippi river valley, the Atlantic coast district, and the Pacific coast. The marsh region of northern Indiana was a favorite resting and feeding place during the spring and fall migratory flights."

Another observer of the scene during the closing days of the lake and marshlands was F.E. Ling. Writing in *Outdoor Indiana* in 1936, Ling tells of his recollections of the area as he found it as a youth 50 years earlier, "It was not uncommon to see 500 wood ducks in the air at one time, in these areas. They fed all over the swamp and sloughs, mostly on acorns from the thousands of trees in the swamp, but they roosted in certain suitable areas as soon as the young were able to fly well. The destruction of such good nesting and rearing areas has had much to do with the scarcity of wood ducks. I believe that drainage has done

1876 Atlas Depicts Size Of Beaver Lake



more to create our scarcity than all other causes combined."

As Darroch reported, "as late as 1885 it was one of the most popular resorts for the hunter and sportsman to be found in the Middle West. The fur-bearing animals had been almost eradicated, but the game of the feathered tribe was still abundant." Fishing also continued to yield plentiful catches at this time. In the late 1880's Lemuel Milk, a wealthy land speculator and cattleman from Kankakee, IL who had purchased a tract of 40,000 acres in Newton County in 1852, widened and deepened the drainage ditch, and the lake gradually disappeared.

One eyewitness to the draining of Beaver Lake was Thomas Rogers Barker's son, Ned Barker. In a talk to the students of Morocco High School in 1935 Barker told the students, "Along the Kankakee River and at Lake Village, a fine group of citizens were coming in. In coming in with their enterprises, they drained the lake with disastrous results.

"My father had a hunting camp on the big lake. Alexander Lanier was with him here, also A.J. Kent. Lanier said this was the greatest hunting territory in the world. Lanier wanted to give 1,000 acres of land to me, but father objected because the drainage would destroy game and increase taxes."

As the lake receded, more evidence of the sinister history of the Prairie Banditti and Bogus Island was uncovered. As the *Morocco Centennial Book* recorded, "After Beaver Lake was drained, bones and the remains of skeletons were found in the region. Not even tradition gives us a clue as to the many who may have died by foul means in the days when every man was a law unto himself."

The drainage of the lake also disclosed another remnant of its outlaw past. In the story of Thomas Rogers Barker's son, Samuel, spending a night on Bogus Island as a guest of the bandits, he was taken to the island in a big boat. As Allen Kenoyer wrote, "Mr. Barker said that when the waters of the lake were being drained out, it brought to light the rotting hull of a very large boat which had evidently lain at the bottom for many years. He believed it to be the boat that was used by the "outlaws" as no boat like it had been in use on the lake for a long time."

By the late 1880's the lake was gone, but in the 37 years following the adoption of the Swamp Lands Act in 1852 there was still more drama in the saga of Beaver Lake to be played out. The stages on which this drama was played out range from the lake bed, to the courts, to the Indiana Statehouse, to the halls of Congress.

Chapter Six The Lake Bed and Swamps: Schemes and Scandals

One could reasonably think that the story of a region, which includes tales of Indian occupation, the dominance and subsequent expulsion of a bloodthirsty band of outlaws and the drainage of the largest lake in the state of Indiana, would exhaust the grist of the storyteller's mill. Such might, indeed, be the case when considering a "normal" area. But, of course, Beaver Lake country was no "normal" area, and the saga of the lake has a couple more twists before it dries up.

(Editor's note: The United States donated to the State of Indiana certain portions of government lands within its borders, which took the name Swamp Lands. Thus, the creation of the Swamp Law Act of 1852. The Auditor and Treasurer of the county were authorized to be the agents for the State selling these lands. The Governor appointed a Commission of Swamp Lands and the Commission employed an Engineer. Such swamp lands were to be drained, reclaimed and sold. Any portion of the amount of the sale not used for expenses connected with draining wetlands was to become part of the Common School Fund of the State of Indiana. It is written that the Indiana Legislators heard that the funds from the sale of these lands were being improperly used, and a Swamp Land Committee of Investigation was formed.)

The Swamp Land Act of 1852 particularly affected the swampy regions of Newton County (which was then a part of Jasper county), Lake and Jasper Counties,

First Recorded Deed Transfer of Beaver Lake Lands

Reprinted from Al Clummin's web site
http://www.geocities.com/allenhc_2000/bogusislandhistory.htm

Putting aside Michael Bright's claim as owner and proprietor to the Beaver Lake lands and island, Lemuel Milk a land speculator and cattle baron who lived in Kankakee, Illinois, acquired upwards to 40,000 acres in the Beaver Lake area. His is the first recorded transfer of land deed in the Newton County Auditor's records.

His daughter, Jennie (Milk) Conrad appears as an owner for many years of Sections 3 and 4 totaling 1,124 acres. These sections are about 4 or 5 miles north of Bogus Island.

Several transfers of Bogus Island and surrounding area were made through the years and then within a few years, the property returned to the original seller. In 1895 Clarey and Paine sold to Bonnell and in 1897 Bonnell deeds the property back to Clarey and Payne. Likewise, in 1932 Earling transfers property to Carson and then in 1950 Carson deeds it back to Earling.

The Land Owners Sherburne Earling

Earling purchased several thousand acres from C. Oliver Holmes and Fred & Emily Lee in 1928 and 1929. Bogus Island was part of the acreage, and deeds were recorded on February 18, 1928 and December 29, 1929.

Earling was a lawyer in Chicago and sold the lands to Ferdinand C. Carson in 1932. Apparently, Earling financed the purchase to Carson. I don't know if Carson farmed the lands or rented them to other tenants. But on December 26, 1950, Carson deeds the property back to Earling.

In the late 1950's U.S. Highway 41 was improved and made into a four-lane highway. The highway went through the island, and as much as 95%, or more, of the original Bogus Island was used as fill to build the new highway through the surrounding swamplands. Only a small part of the Island was left.

Earling rented the property to local farmer tenants. Earling lived in Chicago and died in late 1963. The Northern Trust Bank was the executor of his estate, and the bank was charged to liquidate his assets. One of the assets was the farm and the remnants of

Bogus Island. The acreage totaled about 3,139 acres.

At the time of Earling's death, Allen Cummins was a farm manager in the trust real estate department of The Northern Trust Bank of Chicago. He went to the farm and found that some of the land was quite capable of growing corn and soybeans. But much of the land was very poor, sandy soils and poorly drained. It was only good for pasture or "to help hold the rest of the world together." There were two farm tenants, and I leased the cropland to them for 1964 crop year. The only improvement on the property was an old abandoned log cabin near the island. When The Nature Conservancy purchased the property in 1997, they refurbished the building and it is now used as their office for their activities at this site.

As executors of Earling's estate, The Northern Trust placed the farm for sale in early 1964. I remember two individuals coming into the bank, one perhaps in his 30's named Merlin Karlock and the other, Everett Madison, Karlock's grandfather. They were from nearby Momence, Illinois. Everett Madison already owned considerable acreage adjacent and west of this property. Terms were negotiated with Madison and Karlock and on April 3, 1964 title for the farm that included Bogus Island was transferred to Merlin Karlock.

Merlin Karlock

In June 1968, Karlock's grandfather died. He owned other acreage in the Beaver Lake area, and I assume Karlock inherited his grandfather's farmlands. Karlock bought
Continued on page 24 >>

Chain of Title of Bogus Island

Reprinted from Al Cummin's web site

The chain of title was obtained for the following legal from the deed transfer records in the Newton County Auditor's office. Copies of actual deeds were observed or obtained from the Newton County Recorder's office. Although the various titleholders owned additional surrounding acreages, the chain of title was run only for the described legal.

The island is and was situated within the areas of these legal descriptions: The East ½ of Section 16, Township 30 North, Range 9 West and all of Section 15, Township 30 North Range 9 West all in the civil township of McClellan, Newton County Indiana. Beginning with the swampland deed transfer book located in the Auditor's office in the Newton County Indiana courthouse, the following chain of title is shown:

Date of transfer	
3/10/1870	The State of Indiana to Lemuel Milk
1/3/1890	Lemuel Milk to Francis H. Wells
2/20/1892	Francis H. Wells to John F. Trimmer
4/12/1893	John F. Trimmer to Thomas Clarey and George W. Payne
10/16/1895	Thomas Clarey and George W. Payne to Carrie G. Bonnell
9/22/1897	Carrie G. Bonnell to Thomas Clarey and George W. Payne
8/12/1916	Thomas Clarey and George W. Payne to David H. and Anna Ethel Craig
10/13/1920	David H. & Anna Ethel Craig to Eli Miner
???	Eli Miner to Cary Seagraves (between 10/13/20 & 3/12/23)
3/12/1923	Cary I. Seagraves to Theodore Johnson
11/9/1925	Theodore Johnson to Eli Miner
9/26/1927	Eli W. Miner to C. Oliver Holmes
11/25/1927	C. Oliver Holmes to Fred C. Lee (all Section 15, T30N, R9W)
2/15/1928	C. Oliver Holmes to Sherburne Earling (E ½ Sec 16, T30N, R9W)
12/29/1929	Fred C. Lee to Sherburne Earling (all Section 15, T30N, R9W)
????	Sherburne Earling to Ferdinand C. Carson
5/7/1932	Ferdinand C. Carson to Sherburne Earling
5/7/1932	Sherburne & Alice C. Earling to Ferdinand C. Carson
12/26/1950	Ferdinand C. Carson to Sherburne Earling
4/10/1964	The Northern Trust Bank as Executor for Sherburne M. Earling to Merlin Karlock
1/9/1980	Merlin Karlock to The Prudential Insurance Company of America
2/28/1997	The Prudential Insurance Company of America to The Nature Conservancy

Web site: http://www.geocities.com/allenhc_2000/bogusislandhistory.htm

Newton County Historical Publications/Post Cards Available

?Postcards of Newton County

Series includes 7 different views of the current and past Courthouse, one view of Bogus Island. \$1.00 each or the entire set \$8.00 plus tax.

?“An Archaeological Report On Newton County” Soft cover \$5.00 plus tax.

Written by Joseph E. Hiestand in 1951, and published originally by the Indiana Historical Bureau. There are more than 45 Indian villages and 51 campsites identified and described in this reprint of the original publication.

?“Beaver Lake, The Land of Enchantment” - Hard cover \$20.00, soft cover \$10.00 plus tax.

Written by Elmore Barce in 1938 after his visit with Alexander Lanier Barker near his cabin, east of Sumava Resorts, and listened to his inimitable tales of Beaver Lake and it's surrounding area. Barce felt that after a life of seventy-six years, “Ned” Barker, the stories and traditions that came from this visit were worthy of publication.

?The Morocco Sesquicentennial Historical Collection - \$60.00 plus tax.

Over 400 pages, 200 photographs and 13,000 family names are included in this one-of-a-kind publication, compiled by Gerald Born and Beth Bassett in 2002. Articles written by local historians Gerald Born, Clay Blaney and Donna LaCosse, featuring the earliest settlers, businesses, community organizations, churches, friends and neighbors, are complimented with photographs from that era. Family histories, Beaver Lake, Bogus Island, Sam Rice, Jennie Conrad, The Gaff Ranch, the “Wildcat” Bank of North America, Indian Chiefs Turkey Foot and Bull, are just a few of the people, places and things that make up the heritage of Beaver Township and the Town of Morocco.

?The Newton County Historical Coloring Book - \$5.00 plus tax

Line drawings suitable for coloring with captions using Newton County Landmarks drawn by local artists and a must for anyone interested in Newton County History. Suitable for youngsters and adults alike, this unique view of the county is informative, educational and a delight to view.

?“Ralph, The Story of Bogus Island” - \$5.00 plus tax

Originally written by Jethro Hatch as a serial for the Newton County Enterprise, this romantic tale of old Beaver Lake country and the island that stood in its midst captures the essence of the era when the banditti made the island their home. Interwoven is a tale of a boy who was orphaned, raised by a family who lived near the lake, searches for the truth about who he is and where he originated, meets a girl, falls in love and the resulting adventures of his quest.

?Morocco Centennial Days (Only in Compact Disc) - \$20.00 plus tax.

The Morocco Sesquicentennial Celebration has prompted a look backward to the events of the Morocco Centennial of fifty years ago. Photographs of the pageant and parade are featured with documents relating to the events which have been offered to the Society for its use. These, along with the Centennial booklet written by Ruth Corbin have been combined to form a unique view of those events of long ago.

?“The Newcomer” (Limited copies available) One Year Group - \$10.00 or \$2.25 each, plus tax.

The official newsletter of the Newton County Historical Society began in April of 1994. Initially published quarterly through 1996, and then published once again in the winter of 1999, it continues today as a link to Society members.

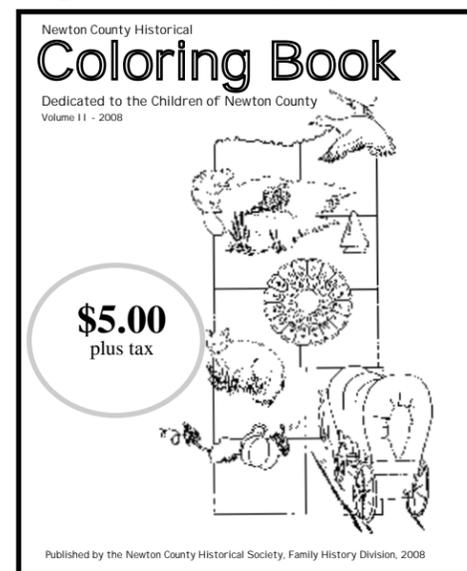
To order any of these publications, please send check or money order payable to the Newton County Historical Society to P.O. Box 303, Kentland, IN 47951. Please include \$3.00 postage and handling for each publication ordered, and 6% tax for Indiana customers. The Resource Center located at 310 E. Seymour Street, Kentland, Indiana is open on Monday afternoon 1-5, and Friday, 11:00 - 3:00 CST, or contact County Historian Donna LaCosse at 219-285-2861 to place an order for your books. All proceeds utilized for future publications.

NOW YOU KNOW!

Janet Miller's
Answers to
Do You Know?

1. The remains of two mammals that have been found in the Newton/Jasper County area are the mammoth and the mastodon.
2. A survey party led by John Tipton established the Indiana/Illinois state line in 1821. His diary entries are the first known recorded land descriptions of this area.
3. According to the land survey recorded by John Tipton, they came upon the Pickemink River. Following is his diary account: “100 mile intersected Timber a stream supposed to be the South fork of Illinois River Indians call it Pickemink Runs W at present this stream is uncommonly high from appearance when much low(er) would afford water sufficient for Boats of considerable Burthen S side the Bank high and good North side rather low the Banks sandy the Bed gravely good timber on Booth sides encamped on the south Bank.”
4. In an 1827 census of Pottawotamie Indians when the provisions were disbursed: “at the pick emink, *Ca no to co* was given 50 beef and 50 bbls. flour for 50 persons”.
5. The two areas of Newton County that resemble the great marshlands are Willow Slough and Kankakee State Fish and Wildlife Areas.

Just Released!



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including Beaver Lake country. With the many thousands of acres of land that would be transferred from public to private hands, a situation was created that attracted the attention of land speculators, many of whom were unscrupulous.

The details of the swampland frauds are appropriately murky. The corruption that took place under the 1852 Swamp Land Act was so great that the legislature created a second Swamp Land Act in 1857 to correct the deficiencies in the earlier law. In many instances, however, the second act only confirmed the corrupt practices that had take place under the first.

In 1861 the Indiana General Assembly created the Swamp Lands Committee to investigate the transactions carried out under the color of the swampland laws. The Committee detected that state officials “had defrauded the Swamp Land Fund to the extent of upward of \$40,000,” but that paled in comparison to the frauds perpetrated under these laws on the county level.

The 1883 history offers the following excerpts from the committee's report that spelled out in greater detail how the frauds worked:

“By the Swamp Act Law of 1852 it was made the duty of the Governor to appoint Swamp Land Commissioners in every county owning swamp lands. In many instances these appointments were singularly unfortunate, possessing neither qualifications nor honesty of such a character as to fit them for their responsibilities.

“We have had our attention called to the official misconduct of these officers in several counties, but have found it utterly impossible to give the subject the investigation which the interest of the State and justice demand. In the county of Jasper (of which Newton was then a part), our investigations have satisfied us that the officers of that county have not only aided others in the commission of great frauds upon the Swamp Land Funds, but have also been participants in the profits arising there

from. In this charge we make no reference to the present Treasurer and Auditor of this county.

“The Commissioner, at a letting of a large amount of ditching under the law of 1852, let almost the entire work to one man for the sum of 20 cents per cubic yard, although at this letting one was as low as 10 cents. The ditching contracted for at this letting has never been finished according to the plans and specifications, and some of the



Bogus Island as it appeared in the Morocco Centennial Book.

ditches are worthless. The entire estimate of the work, amounting to \$39,451.59, has been paid to the contractor. According to the testimony before us, this one transaction has resulted in great loss to the Swamp Land Fund, and loss to the value of real estate in the vicinity of the work.”

“In the year 1856, without the color of law, and in violation of all rights, the then Auditor of the State, Hiram E. Talbot, directed the Auditor of Jasper County (Turner Knox) to withhold from sale a large amount of swamp land designated by him. The committee is compelled to conclude that this order was prompted with a view to personal and private speculation. This, no doubt, was the commencement of a system of frauds unheard of before. A spirit of speculating in these lands was engendered, and in a short time there were formed four separate companies, who selected as they termed it, and actually obtained, by the complicity of the Swamp Land Commissioners, deeds for about 124,000 acres of the best of the lands vacant in the county. The deeds to these lands were procured without the shadow of law from

the officers of State.

“The Swamp Land Act, approved March 5, 1857, required that the fraudulent conveyances be returned and canceled when the work was not completed, but providing that the loose contracts upon which they had been obtained, might be ratified and confirmed by the Swamp Land Commissioner, and provided that the contractors might file with the County Auditor lists of the lands selected by them to

be taken in payment for ditching, and the sale of these selected lands, was then prohibited by the county officers till the completion or perfecting of the contract for the payment of which they were filed, and that 75 per cent upon the estimates of the work done should be issued to the contractor until all was done, when certificates for the whole should be issued; and provided further that the contractor might at any time by depositing \$1.25 per acre with the County Treasurer, for the whole or any part of the lands in his list, take out certificates and procure patents for the same, and that the money so paid into the county treasury should be then

retained, to be repaid to the contractor at the rate of 75 percent upon this law. The Swamp Land Commissioner of Jasper County confirmed all the old contracts at 20 cents per cubic yard, which had originally been let from 12 to 18 cents per cubic yard, and the contractors were permitted to file lists of lands to any amount they desired, and the amounts of their respective contracts were swelled up to cover the amount filed for, and in a short time after the taking effect of this law, all the unsold swamp lands in Jasper county, amounting to about 175,000 acres, were then absorbed and nearly all the contractors, without paying any money in the county treasury, by private arrangement with (Jacob) Merkle, the then Treasurer of Jasper County, obtaining from him certificates of purchase, and upon these obtained the greater part of their patents for the lands. In a few instances, the contracts have been, in whole or in part, completed, but probably not one-half of the ditching is yet completed. From estimates of the whole amount of these contracts, and upon the amount of work done upon the same at the expiration of the term of said Merkle's

term of office, he should have paid over to his successor in office at least \$100,000 of the money deposited with him by contractors for lands obtained by them, but not one cent was so paid over by him. The lands being gone and there being no money for the same on deposit in the county treasury, and consequently no incentive to the completion of the contracts, and there being no law to enforce their completion, your committee would recommend that some law be passed to remedy this defect.

“There is evidence before the committee showing that Merkle, without the shadow of authority or law, issued to _____, in the name of his brothers and others, certificates of purchase for large amount of these lands previously filed for by contractors, and that upon these fraudulent certificates _____ obtained patents; and that the contractor, whose lands he had stolen, in order to avoid troublesome and expensive litigation, compromised with him, permitting him to retain 3,500 acres of lands thus obtained, of which Merkle got a portion.

“From the evidence in possession of your committee, they cannot but express their surprise Governor (Ashbel P.) Willard should have appointed Merkle to the responsible office of Swamp Land Commissioner of Jasper County, soon after the expiration of his term of office as Treasurer of said county, notwithstanding it was known to his Excellency that the said Merkle had been sued on his official bond as a defaulter to the Swamp Land Fund, in 1855, which suit he had compromised by giving his notes with surety for the sum of \$23,460.30, thus acknowledging his defalcation, and that the greater part of those notes, though due, were still outstanding and unpaid; and not withstanding that it was known to His Excellency that said Merkle, had again been sued upon his official bond as Swamp Land Treasurer, for the further defalcation of \$14,000 to the Swamp Land Fund, as certified by the Auditor of the State; and that in his official bond as county

treasurer to the amount of \$1,000 for State revenue and that was then and still is pending against him upon his official bond for the defalcation of county revenue, and had not at the date of his appointment as said Commissioner, and still has not, settled with



This photo of Bogus Island originally appeared with the article in 1923 written by Sidney Schanlaub that appeared in the Indianapolis Star. It was also published in a previous issue of The Newcomer and The Morocco Sesquicentennial Collection, 2006.

the Auditor and Treasurer of the state, or county Commissioners, for either State, swamp land or county revenues; and notwithstanding that it was known to His Excellency that by Section 10, Article II, of the Constitution of Indiana, said Merkle was wholly 'ineligible to any office of trust or profit,' and that by an act of the Legislature, approved March 1, 1855, he was guilty of felony, still, with a full view of these disqualifications, and disabilities, he, Merkle, was appointed and invested by His Excellency with duties of this important and responsible office, for the performance of which he is not required to give any bonds. In view of all of these facts, your committee would recommend that His Excellency be respectfully requested to remove Mr. Merkle from said office.”

(Yost note: The footnote for this segment should note that the 1883 history's summation of the committee's work utilized “M_____” for the name of the local official involved in the swindles. Cross checking with the original committee report I determined that the official thusly referred to was one Jacob Merkle, first a Jasper County Treasurer and subsequently SwampLand Commissioner. This was no doubt done in consideration of the Merkle family. For the sake of clarity, the name of Merkle will be used instead of the “M_____”

in the quotations from the 1883 history.)

William Henry Smith in his 1897 The History of the State of Indiana, while utilizing a different spelling of the County Treasurer and Land Commissioner, offered this description of the legislative investigating committee's findings, “They reported that in one county alone 124,000 acres of land had been illegally deeded away without compensation to the State in any form. Jacob Merkle, Treasurer of Jasper County, was charged by the Committee with having illegally withheld \$100,000, and having compromised by giving his notes

for \$24,000, which had never been paid, and with being a defaulter to the State in a still further sum. While thus indebted to the State he had been appointed by the Governor a Swamp Land Commissioner. It was shown that in one case where contracts for ditching had been let at twelve cents per cubic yard, they had been raised to twenty cents, and certificates issued for that amount and land given in payment, and that the ditching was never completed.”

The Michael Bright Plat

The land speculations involving the swamp land in Beaver Lake country and beyond were not the only unusual real estate transactions conducted in this area. As Judge Darroch observed, “Perhaps the most interesting part of Beaver Lake history is an account of the title to the land covered by the lake.”

In 1834 the federal government undertook a survey of the area, and a meander line designated the portion of the land that Beaver Lake covered. The result was that the land that immediately surrounded the lakebed consisted of a number of fractional and irregularly shaped parcels of land, which did not conform to the normal grid pattern in which land is platted. In the early 1850's a prominent

usually do with inquiries, asking them if they had any ideas about the Goult family. Kyle replied with:

“Don't know if this is a coincidence or not, but I have a Frederick Rayner buried in Riverside. He was born in England June 30, 1855. He lived between Brook and Mt. Ayr and was a farmer. He died near Rensselaer, Indiana and was survived by his wife, Anna (Story) Rayner, sons of John and Robert, and Mrs. John Critser of Rensselaer. (Does not say if this was a daughter, but I think so.) James, died in October of 1932.”

Later, another email from Kyle noted that Fred Rayner's son, James, is also buried at Riverside and his obit states he had a sister survive him, Sarah Critser of Rensselaer. The Mrs. Critser in Fred's obit was a daughter.

I then logged in at ancestry.com and found many references to the Gould family in Newton County. In the mean time, Lionel Goult had sent a reply to Kyle's information:

“This is great. I have found that Fred Rayner was born at Stow, Norfolk and that he was the brother of James who was the father of both John Goult's wife Charlotte Maud and James Goult's wife Beatrice Annie. So I am sure that we are on the right lines.

“I was originally prompted to visit the Ellis Island site and when I entered the name Goult I had a list of 15 some of whom were duplicated because they had been back to England for some reason and had returned to America in 1919. Of the 15 I could say positively that 13 of them are my relatives. The original crossing was made on the Philadelphia which left Southampton and arrived at Ellis Island on 20 August 1910 and this included John and Charlotte, their son Horace, James and Beatrice and a child Ethel Maud whose parentage I have not yet established.

“The 1919 return was on 'Lapland' which left Southampton and arrived on 3rd November.

“When I was looking at cemeteries last evening I came across the death of Albert Edward Goult and his wife Mildred. They are both buried in the Front Center Section of Oakland Cemetery. Albert was one of those on the Lapland in 1919. I hope all of this helps and I look forward to hearing from you again, please. Many thanks for your help.”

I then sent an email to Lionel with copies of John Goult's World War I registration card, and 1920 census records that I found at ancestry.com that indicated

another family name, Bradley. I suggested that he utilize the site to find further information about his family, and when he found death dates or other information regarding the family, I could do further research here locally. His reply came the next day:

“Good morning Beth,

Thank you very much for the information you sent to me yesterday. I already subscribe to Ancestry.com but with just a UK remit because until last Saturday I was completely unaware that I had anybody overseas. Of course now that I know that I have I shall extend my membership to worldwide. Thank you for what you have done. I am very grateful for all of your help so far and with your permission I could be back in touch when I have done some more research. My main reason for contacting you was to try to discover if any of those who came over have left descendants who still reside in Newton County and with whom I might be able to begin correspondence so that we may all learn a little more about our joint past.

“The Bradley family that you mention were Grandad's sister Nellie (Ellen) and her husband Abraham and son Stephen (Stephen was a family name going back over several generations). They came over in 1913 I believe. Once again, very many thanks for your help. Lionel”

Obituaries were found for members of the Raynor and Albert Goult family. Thanks to Donna LaCosse's collection of Morocco Courier obituaries from the 1980's, Mildred Goult was easily found, and after snapping a photo of the tombstone located at Oaklawn, I knew Albert's death date and was able to provide him with that obituary. Kyle's collection of Riverside Cemetery obituaries also provided two of the Raynor family members. I'm still waiting to hear from Lionel regarding those submissions to him.

Tebo Family Inquiry

Another query, regarding the Tebo family, came up with little more than what was available on our web site and ancestry.com. I did go out and snap photos of tombstones at Buswell and Pleasant Grove for Jill Dale, the researcher. She did not have exact death dates, so we were unable to find any local obituaries. She replied how grateful she was for the pictures, and couldn't believe I went out in the snow to take the pictures. She resides in sunny Santa Barbara California!

Any inquiries we receive are filed

away in the family history files we have at the Resource Center. So, if you have information that you wouldn't mind sharing, please drop in the center, or send it to the editor for future researchers.

He's Identified 265 Civil War Burials, But Still Needs Our Help

Kyle Conrad's efforts to place GAR plaques on our Civil War Veterans Continues.

Over the last two years, Kyle Conrad has been indexing the burials of Civil War veterans buried in Newton County. To date he has identified over 265 burials. Now he is seeking help on some men who could possibly be added to that list and is hoping society members can help. Following is a listing of those that have been mentioned in one or more of several sources he has used to create his database, but who he cannot prove or does not have enough information to prove their service. If anyone has ANY information on any of these individuals, please contact Kyle at KidClerk@aol.com or write him at PO Box 192, Brook, IN 47922.

James Frame, supposedly buried at Pleasant Grove. **Lewis Adams**, supposedly buried at Pleasant Grove. **Charles Everts**, died 1902, supposedly buried at Pleasant Grove. **Marion Collens**, supposedly buried at Doran Cemetery. **Ephraim Bryant**, possibly unmarked burial at Fairlawn. **John Thompson**, buried at Fairlawn. **George Dick**, died 1891, possibly buried at Fairlawn. **Samuel Laird**, buried at Fairlawn. **Rev. Henry J. Vanduyn**, died 1904 buried at Goodland.

George King, died 1924 buried at Goodland. **Andrew J. Ball**, died 1871, buried at Goodland. **James Wilson**, died 1893, possibly buried at Goodland. Was member of Goodland GAR. **E. Morgan**, possibly buried at Goodland. **Marion James**, buried at Goodland, possibly confederate veteran, **George H. Smith**, lived in Union Twp, Benton Co. Died 1922 and buried at Goodland. **James A. Dewolf**, lived in Lake Twp. **Luther Bartholomew**, died 1875, buried at Murphey Cemetery. **S. Kelley**, possibly buried at Murphey Cemetery. **Harvy N. Graves**, buried at Oakland Cemetery. **Sidney Orville Standish**, died 1901, possibly buried at North Star Cemetery.

W.W.W.

who . . . what . . . where . . .
Inquires from our website
www.rootsweb.com/~innewton

I, along with Janet Miller and Kyle Conrad, have discovered that doing look-ups for Newton County family names is very rewarding. When we are able to send a copy of an obituary, marriage record, or snap a shot of a tombstone, we know we've enlightened the families of our subject matter to their way of life in Newton County. Here are some of recent adventures with inquiries.

Current Owners of a 1955

Ford Thunderbird Seeks Original Roots

A note came via email from Carol Wood, the coordinator of the Jasper County Rootsweb site, regarding research on an automobile purchased at DeKoker Motor Sales, located in Morocco. You just never know what type of inquiries will come your way!

"My name is Dianne and I am the person that instigated the emails regarding the Ford Dealership in Morocco. Seems a bit strange to a lot of people that someone would chase the history of a car and the persons involved in the sale and purchase of the same. Yes, my husband loves his cars (me too).

"Beth thank you so much for the photo of the business in 1955 very much appreciated

"I will attach a photo or two for you to look at, that may help you understand a little - the car is beautiful - untouched exactly the same as it was in 1955 apart from a few marks and chips to the paint work - everything is totally original.

"The gentleman who bought it (his name was Max Brunsvold) obviously treasured it.

"I do not know where Mr. Brunsvold was living when he bought the car in 1955, but know he was residing in Pacoima California in 1956 and later moved to Riverside.

"If anyone can help with history re the Ford Dealership in Morocco and Mr. L. De Koker, or Mr. Max Brunsvold I am hoping they will share it with me - I would be most grateful.

"The photos are of the car as it was advertised. The previous owner and the gentleman who imported it from the US only owned it for thirteen months, and it again spent most of its life in the garage - he did intend to keep it but had a change of mind.

"Thought I would send you a photos of the Thunderbird today here in Melbourne, Australia, purchased it in South Australia

"Again if anyone can help with any information it would be great.

"Many thanks for your time. Dianne Duncanson, Melbourne, Australia"

An on-going history hunt is underway via Dave DeKoker and his family. I sent the email to him, knowing that he could help Dianne more than I. He replied that he would send it on to his cousin Don, and would keep me in the loop. Stay tuned for future reports.

An Inquiry From Across The Pond

"Hi Beth,

"I hope that you might be able to help me. I was born and raised in Gorefield, a small village in the UK, I now live in Norfolk and I am researching my family history. I have discovered that several members of my family came over to America in the early 1900's.

My great uncle John Goult came over from Wisbech in Cambridgeshire UK to the USA in 1910 with his wife Charlotte, his

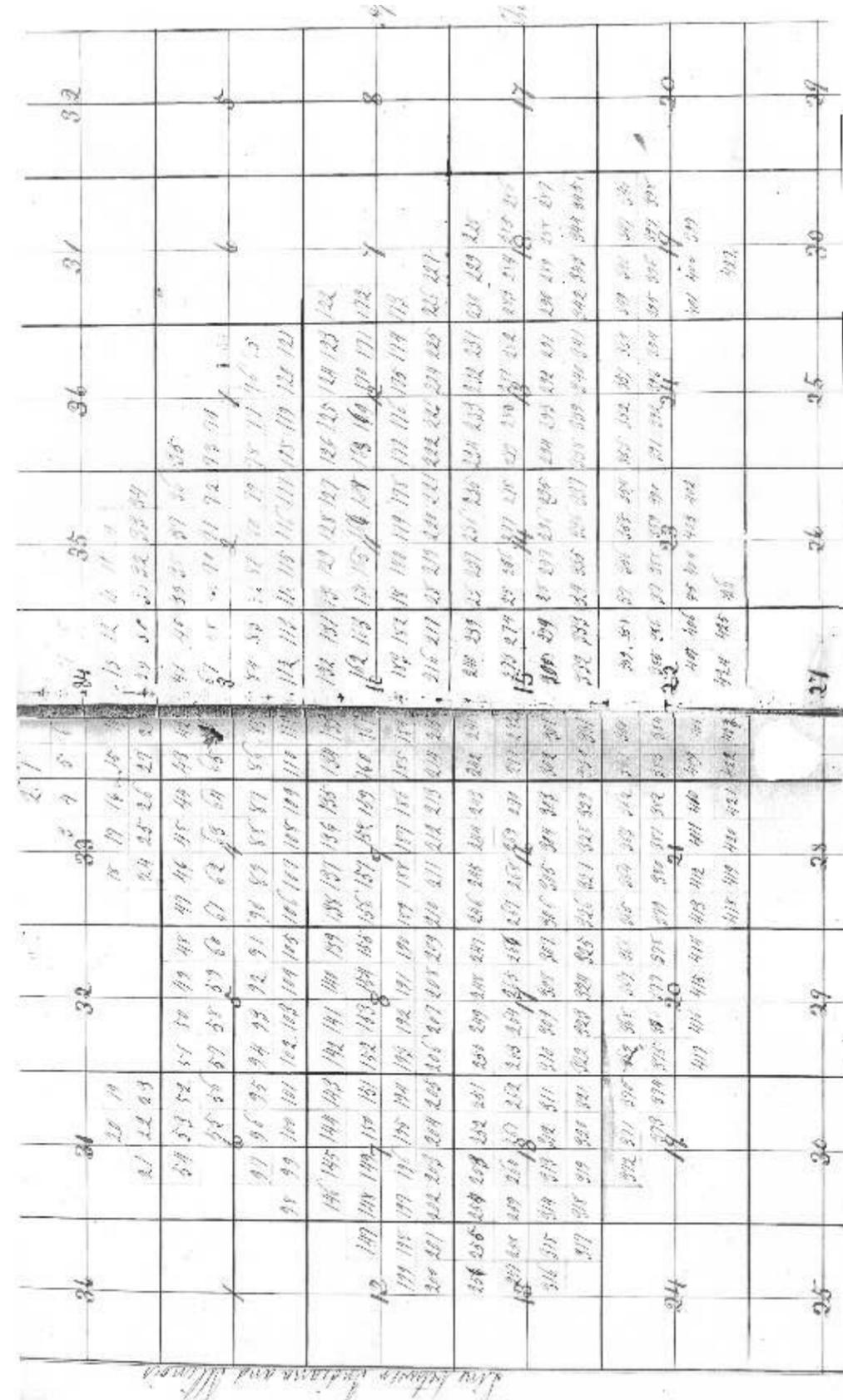


Photos of the '55 Ford now in Australia. The color of the car was turquoise with white interior. - Additional pictures will be shown next issue if a follow up story is submitted.

brothers James and Harry and James wife Beatrice and several other members of his family. I believe they had an Uncle? Rayner living in Morocco. Certainly this is where Uncle John and his family settled. John was shown on the ship's manifest as a fruit grower and this would tie in with my research for other members of the family. My own late father was indeed a fruit grower. I have researched the Goult's back to 1776 and until now I had a gap where John Goult and his family should be. I wonder if you might be able to tell if there are still any of John and Charlotte's descendants living in Morocco, please. I do remember my grandmother writing regular letters to somebody in America when I was growing up in the 1950's but I did not know at the time who it was she was in communication with. I am eager to hear anything that might help me to link up with my family in America and to possibly exchange stories. If you are unable to help me then I apologize for bothering you. Best wishes, Lionel Goult"

I forwarded this email to Kyle Conrad and Janet Miller, as I

Michael Bright's Plat of the Beaver Lake Bed



I stumbled upon this plat in a very odd way. With the purchase of our new microfilm reader, I had randomly pulled out a box of film that we have on loan from the Newton County Courthouse of deed books and other items. Can you believe that this was the first image that I saw? Thanks to John Hall, Newton County Recorder, I was able to see the original plat. Along with this drawing, a very long, description of property, taking up to 2 1/2 pages accompanied the recorded deed.

lawyer and politician named Michael G. Bright bought all of the fractional lots surrounding the lake. As a result, he owned a narrow strip of land all around the lake. Bright purchased these parcels from John P. Dunn and Amzie B. Condit, both of who figure in a subsequent uproar over the land titles. Bright was a classic “wheeler-dealer” whose machinations were not hindered by the fact that his brother U. S. Senator Jessie D. Bright was “the most powerful Indiana figure in national politics during the 1850s.”

In 1857 Michael Bright made a plat of the lands he owned surrounding the lake. As Judge Darroch recorded, “In the plat he assumed to extend into the lake the outward lines of the government survey, east and west, north and south, so, as he asserted they

would, by due intersection subdivide the entire area (including the lake which had not yet been drained) into lots of 40 acres each, which lots he numbered on his plat from one to 427. Attached to this plat he made a written statement, which after reciting his purchase and ownership of all marginal tracts of land (around the lake), contained this declaration of ownership, 'And, whereas, in virtue of being riparian proprietor (owner of the lands adjacent to the lake) of all said lots and tracts of land, I am, by operation of law, the owner and proprietor of the bed of said lake, and of all the islands covered by the waters thereof.'”

Bright executed this plat with the above declaration attached and recorded it in the office of the Jasper County Recorder.

Subsequently, after the establishment of Newton County, he transferred the plat and recorded it in Newton County. By this action, Michael Bright, in effect, claimed that as a result of purchasing the irregular tracts, which surrounded the lake, and which amounted to 2,500 acres, he became the owner of the 16,000 acres, which constituted the lake bed. The recording of the plat established his claim as a matter of public record.

Shortly thereafter, Bright filed an ejectment suit against one William Blake. Bright charged that Blake was in possession of one of the islands in the lake. Though lawyers appeared for both sides and filed elaborate briefs, Judge Darroch states that it was believed that the lawsuit might actually

Continued on page 7 >>

Michael J. Bright's Plat

This Description Was Recorded With His Map of the Beaver Lake Bed, 1857

(Editor's Note: the following is a transcription of the recorded deed of Beaver Lake lands as it was written in 1857. Upon proofreading the article, Janet Miller questioned several aspects of the descriptions given by Michael Bright. They differ from the standard verbiage used today, i.e. Range 9 East should be Range 9 West.)

Whereas, I the undersigned, Michael G. Bright, of the City of Madison in the County of Jefferson, and the Grantee from John P. Dunn and wife and Amzie B. Condit jointly and from John P. Dunn and wife alone of the following described lots and lands, situate lying and being in the County of Jasper in the State aforesaid that is to say:

In Township 30, North of Range 9 East – Lots 1, 2, 3, and 4 in Section 7; Lots 2 and 3 in Section 18; Lots 1, 2, 3 and 4 in Section 19.

In Township 30, North of Range 9 East – Lots 2, 3 and 4 in Section 1; Fractional Section 2; Fractional Section 4; Lots 1, 2 and 3 in Section 5; Lots 1, 2, 3, 4 and 5 in Section 6; Fractional Section 7, Fractional Section 12; Fractional Section 18; Lots 1, 2 and 3 in Section 19; Lots 1, 2, 3 and 4 in Section 23; Lots 1 and 2 in Section 24;

In Township 31, North of Range 9 East – Lots 1, 2, and 3 in Section 31; Lots 1, 2 and 3 in Section 33; Lots 1, 2, 3 and 4 in Section 34; Lots 1, 2, 3 and 4 in Section 35.

In Township 30, North of Range 10 East – Lots 1, 2, and 3 in Section 12; Lots 1, 2, 3 and 4 in Section 13.

Each and every of which Lots and Tracts of Land above specified are abutted on and bounded by and unnavigable pond of fresh water, called and known by the name of “Beaver Lake” in said County of Jasper, and comprise all the lots and tracts of land surround said Lake, which is so abutted, on or bounded thereby, as by reference to the United States Surveys and Plats thereof will more fully and at large appear.

And whereas in virtue of being the present proprietor of all said lots and tracts of land, I am by order of Law the owner and proprietor of the bed of said Lake, and all the Islands therein and all the lands covered by the waters and whereas under and in pursuance of the provisions of an act entitled, An Act to regulate the

sale of the swamp lands donated by the United States to the State Of Indiana, and to provide for the draining, and reclaiming thereof in accordance with the condition of said Grants, approved May 9, 1852, the waters of said Lake have been partially drained of, and may in time be entirely so, whereby the most, if not in the whole bed of said Lake shall become reclaimed and cultivated soil.

Now it be known that as proprietor and owner of all the lands aforesaid – as well those covered by the waters of said Lake, or which were at anytime so covered, as those not covered by said waters, as above described, I have caused a subdivision to be made into lots according to the plat hereto attached made part hereof and I subjoin the following explanations of said plat namely, First Lots, numerically enumerated on said plat embrace all the lands in and around said Lake of which I am owner and proprietor as aforesaid.

Second, there are in all 427 of said lots, numbered from one (1) to four hundred and twenty seven (427) inclusive.

Third, each lot contains forty acres be the same more or less.

Fourth, the lots are formed by the extension of right lines East and West and North and South, from the outward Government lines, heretofore established in the same manner as such lines would have been run by the Government if unobstructed by the waters of said Lake and by dividing said lines so extended (where necessary) by right lines drawn from points equi-distant from corners formed by due intersection, there is hereby reserved to the present proprietor and to any party or parties who may hereafter be and become the owner of any of said lands, the right at any and all times, of opening and keeping open the ditches or drains which have been undertaken for the purpose of draining off the waters from said Lake, and to this end they or any of them may at any time enter upon so much of said lands as many be necessary for the purpose and may repair and open said ditches, and if essential to the further reclamation of any of said lands may deepen and enlarge these so as to secure the largest possible drainage, doing to the other lots and lands as little damage as may be consistent with the accomplishment of that object.

In witness whereof I have hereunto set my hand and seal this 25th day of April, 1857, M. G. Bright. Recorded October 13, 1857, C. J. Merkle, R.J.C.

Historically Yours

By Newton County Historian Donna LaCrosse

It seems as though I almost get caught up and Beth wants me to do something for the *Newcomer!* Again!! I think she and I will have to sit down for a chat one of these days so I can tell her who is the oldest and who should be telling who what to do!

This winter has been long and hard. When I complain about something I have no control over, you know I have had it up to the gills!! I don't mind winter – it is the constant wind that I find to be annoying.

No, I didn't get anything done this winter except get a year older and be married a year longer. Yep, I turned 80 on March 7 and the kids had a bash for me at the Mount Ayr Community Building. It was a fitting place to have the celebration since I was born in Mount Ayr. Over 60 family and friends gathered to help me celebrate and that made me feel like a queen for a day!

On March 12 we were married 60 years and spent the day very quietly at home as people telephoned with best wishes. It was a great day and a happy one.

I did receive a message from the survey that has been being made in the county and will share that report in the following paragraphs:

The surveyors have reached the half-way mark in the Newton County architectural survey project and have nearly wrapped up their field work. Their findings reveal many architectural and historical treasures in Newton County, from the grand to the everyday.

They began with the goal of recording hundreds of sites throughout the county. They encountered everything from simple log houses built by early Indiana settlers to beautiful Gothic Revival churches, with many architecturally interesting buildings in between. They met helpful homeowners anxious to tell their house's story and people who cared about the history of their community.

Soon the Newton County survey will enter its publication phase. In January 2008 the Division of Historic Preservation and Archaeology awarded Historic Landmarks Foundation of Indiana with a matching grant to prepare the Newton County Survey Interim Report for publication. This will take about a year to

complete.

This report will be available to the public in mid-2009 at which time the Historic Landmarks Foundation of Indiana will hold a book launch event in the county. More information will be available as the book launch event date nears.

I found this most interesting and am eager to find out more about this project. We do have a great county and we want the people who come here to live a hundred years from now to be aware of how proud we were to be able to help make and to record the history that has made this county so great.

This is what history is all about!

Do You Know?

Submitted by Janet Miller

1. There is evidence of two prehistoric mammals that roamed Newton County after the retreat of the glaciers in about 12,000 B.C. Can you name them?
2. Do you know who established the Indiana/Illinois state line? Do you know when it was established?
3. When the Indiana/Illinois state line was established what river was found to be 100 miles north of Terre Haute, Indiana?
4. In 1827, a census was taken of the Pottawatomie Indians and recorded by John Tipton, Indian Agent at Fort Wayne. What two provisions were distributed to the Indians in Newton County?
5. What two areas in Newton County resemble the great marshlands that once covered much of our county?

Answers see page 22.

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Recipes From Days Gone By

COPPER PENNY SALAD

Submitted by Donna LaCrosse

History: My mother, Mary Ann (Watkins) Schanlaub, usually made this salad when she was expected to take a dish to a carry-in or was having lots of people in for Sunday noon dinner. She didn't just make this salad – she took the whole meal with her “just in case someone didn't have time to prepare a dish to bring.” I have prepared this salad lots of times over the 60 years we have been married and know from experience it will stay fresh and ready to eat for at least a week if refrigerated. Enjoy!

2 pounds carrots, sliced about one-fourth inch thick
1 medium raw onion, chopped
1 medium raw green pepper, chopped
1 can tomato soup, undiluted
1 cup sugar
¾ cup vinegar
1/3 cup salad oil
1 teaspoon Worcestershire sauce
1 teaspoon prepared mustard

Cook carrots in salted water until barely tender. Drain well and cool completely. Add onion and green pepper. Toss to mix. Combine remaining ingredients together and mix well. Pour mixture over vegetables, cover and refrigerate overnight before serving.



John J. Yost illustration by R. Dean Ford, from his The Quasqui Collection published in 1985.

At the age of 76, Allen Kenoyer, who fished on the banks of the lake and played with the children of Thomas Rogers Barker, wrote this wistful reflection in 1926, "I was over a part of the lake country this summer, but there isn't any lake anymore. Where once its blue waters rolled and the ducks and fishes swam, is now all dry land. Where the jacksnipe and bitter once fed, where the wild fowl reared her young, now of growing waving fields of wheat or the ripening corn. Hard roads now run across the entire lake bed. The wild animal life which was once so abundant is gone forever. Ah, well, perhaps it is better so. And with the passing of the lake with all its wild life and its former environment we are reminded of the people also who knew it in its olden days are rapidly passing on, and soon there will be none left who knew it then."

While some hail the development of the former lakebed and swamps as progress, and others will regard it with nostalgia and sentiment, there are some, perhaps only a few, who regard the drainage of the lake as a destructive act. One of those who criticized the destruction of the Beaver Lake Country was J. C. Jenkins a writer for the *Motion Picture Herald*, a movie trade paper. His family settled on Beaver Lake Ditch in 1865, and he resided there until 1884. He wrote a memoir piece for the *Morocco Courier* in 1936 about life on the marsh, and said of its demise, "They have made of the river but a dredge ditch; they have drained the Black Marsh into Beaver Lake, they drained Beaver Lake into the Kankakee and Gaff's ranch into Beaver Creek, and they ruined the greatest game and fish paradise in the world."

But the critics of the drainage of the lake could have no more eloquent voice than that of Elmore Barce who wrote after reviewing the beauty he found in the flora and fauna and landscape of the region, "Who then, in the face of all these benefactions, extended for the gratification and the instruction of man, has dared to lay a desecrating hand upon this great natural phenomenon of the north-this paradise of islands and gladsome waters-this great sanctuary for the wild things of the earth, the wild duck, the wild goose, the swan, the bittern and the children of men might have bamboozled in the sands, laughed in the sunshine, and brought back the ruddy glow of health and happiness to pallid cheeks? Let these questions be answered by the greed and avarice of all those wretches who, since the birth of the republic, and have destroyed forests, polluted the waters, diverted the streams, and left behind the abomination of desolation. All together the whole region of this lake is a profound enigma! How long have these fire-pits-these beds of charcoal-been on Bingaman's Island? Where are the arrow-makers who scattered their flints far and wide over the drifting sands? Where have the mighty campfires gone that threw their magic light far out over the bosom of the waters-the silhouettes of these warriors and women dancing against the background of the forest? Why did the white man destroy these fish-these myriads of wild fowl and their nests-this paradise of waters, of islands, of creeping vines? To answer the greed of the distillers of Cincinnati* who did not have enough sense to load a shell-who cared nothing of the history of this lake or its glamorous past-who cared nothing for the future happiness of mankind-but vainly imagined that this wilderness of beach sand would grow bluestem and batten and fatten their ill-gotten wealth. What God so grandly created, man has miserably destroyed.

(Yost note: this is an apparent reference to J. W. Gaff whose land holding, known as the Gaff Ranch, were described in the April 1, 1915 edition of the Enterprise as follows: "This estate contained 10,400 acres and was owned by J. W. Gaff, a wealthy distiller of Cincinnati.")

Indiana is gone. Now more than a century and a half has passed since that adventurous Englishman Thomas Rogers Barker first met with the broken remnants of the once-fierce warriors that inhabited the shores of Beaver Lake in 1840. What are we to make of their times, their passing and their legacy?

Regarding this history of Indians, blood-thirsty land speculators, and rugged pioneers, the casual traveler along US 41 on the old lake bed would have no inkling of the past so rich in legend and lore that once existed in that spot. Perhaps many current residents of the area are equally unaware. But that these rough and rowdy elements are a part of the region's tradition is beyond doubt for the record is well documented.

And what of the passing of the lake? Certainly productive farms have arisen on the former swampland, but an early pioneer might view with amusement the high measure of irrigation now employed to produce a crop on the lakebed. One also wonders what the economic impact would be on the region if the state's largest lake, alive with fish and surrounded by game-filled woodlands and swamp, still existed there. Such speculations have divided observers ever since the changes in the landscape took place.

Historians differ on the legacy of the drainage of the lake. Many would agree with Sidney Schanlaub who wrote in 1923 about the drainage of the lake, 'worthless marshes and quagmires' were producing fine grain and hay crops, while real estate, for the first time, began to have money value."

them fodder for some really good gossip at their next meeting. Arriving at the drive-in, he stepped up to the window to order.

A small coffee please. Cream and sugar for it too, ma'am. Boy it smells good around here. Seventy-nine cents? Let's see, 25, 50, 70, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9. Here you go. Thanks.

Another whiff of the rotisserie hot dogs got the best of him. Oh to hell with it. Give me one of them hot dogs with the works. Yes, lettuce and tomato too. Thanks again, ma'am. Well, better eat and get back to the bridge. Gettin' kinda' tired.

Steam Train found a picnic table under the shade of an old, oak tree to savor his coffee and the gourmet rotisserie hot dog heaped with everything including lettuce and tomato. Afterwards he moseyed on back to the railroad overpass to get a good night's rest.

These bags stayed pretty dry up under this trestle. No critters to deal with either. Looks like it will be a clear moonlit night. Hope it's not too chilly. That bullfrog should sing me to sleep. Might make me dream of frog legs all night.

Maury slipped off into a deep, restful sleep. As he drifted in and out, he did indeed have one of those super-realistic dreams of frog legs jumpin' and dancin' in the hot frying pan. They actually did taste just like chicken-on-a-stick. The early morning dawned with a few patches of misty fog hanging around. The sunlight shining through the branches of another ancient oak tree woke him.

Ahh! Slept good. Everything's dew covered, includin' my feet. Must have been sticking out from under my bags all night. Better get up and start a fire for some hot water. Think I have one packet of instant oatmeal with peaches and cream left and one tea bag. Darn wood's a little damp. Hope it starts ok. Use a little o' this toilet paper for kindling. Ahh, there it goes. Probably shouldn't use this ditch water for drinkin' but it WILL be boiled! Should have some hot water in 'bout fifteen minutes. The smoke'll drive the skeeters away. I need to warm up a bit too. Mixin' this oatmeal will help wake me up.

Maury carried a small knapsack with him containing a couple of cooking and eating utensils along with a few other necessities. He emptied the packet of instant oatmeal with peaches and cream into an enameled drinking cup, added some boiling ditch water out of his ketchup can and sat down on an old stump to enjoy his breakfast.

That's pretty good. Tastes a little bit like tomatoes, ketchup or somthin'. Still good.

Thirty minutes later, after a hazy dazy day dream, the bull frog let out his last croak of the night, bringing Maury back to his senses. He wasn't sure where his mind went for thirty minutes. He passed it

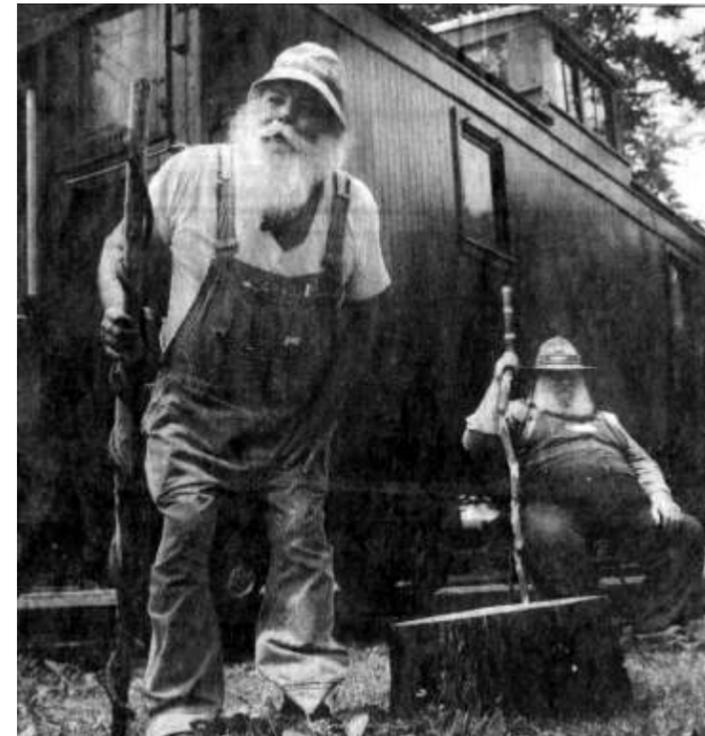
off as old age creeping in.

Well, better break camp. More little towns and ole memories to rekindle. Maybe I can find a real bed and some work for a day or two in Chatsworth or Peoria. Last year, Box Car Willie and me made this trip in my ole VW micro-bus. The trip only took two or three days. Too fast for me. Willie likes to play music and sing. Helps pass the time on the trip. Stayed over night at a farm just north of town. Made me realize how much I enjoy walking through the countryside. Guess it was a nice break though. Well, time to move on. Early morn is cool and there isn't much traffic. Be good to get to Britt in a couple o' weeks and spend some time with those ole

friends. Been doin' this since I was fourteen. Most of my very best friends will be there, many livin' this same life style as long as me. Well, maybe I'll catch up with John next trip. Next stop... Watseka. With that said, Steam Train Maury Graham put on his hat, slung his knapsack over his shoulder, grabbed his walking stick and headed west toward Britt, Iowa.

Epilogue

Though Steam Train's thoughts are fictional, the character of the hobo is not. Steam Train Maury Graham passed through Indiana almost every year on his way to Britt, Iowa, or Rochelle, Illinois, or wherever hobos met in the Midwest. He was crowned King of the Hobos five times over his career. I never had the chance to meet him personally, but on several occasions I've seen him walking along US highway 24. He wore coveralls, a hat and always had his signature beard that reached down to his belt buckle. You can read his



"Steam Train," at the Logansport Festival.

biography in Tales of the Iron Road. My good friend John always had a chance to chat with Steam Train on his trips through the area. He usually followed with a story and picture or two in the local paper. Age caught up with Steam Train and finally a crippling stroke ended his travels. This was according to another hobo friend of Maury, Ohio Tom with whom I conversed with via e-mail (yes, I said e-mail) on a couple of occasions during 2006. Steam Train passed away, "Caught the westbound train" as the hoboes say, shortly after my conversations with Ohio Tom. My good friend John passed on too, early in 2007. Bet they're both swappin' tales of old times, sippin' on a cup of coffee at some heavenly diner or under some pearly railroad overpass. Both surely must have a lot of tales to tell.

Steam Train Remembered

by David W. Miller

David is a 1959 graduate of A. J. Kent High School and Indiana State University. He is a former elementary school teacher and most recently retired as the Cass County Adult Education Coordinator. He lives in Logansport, Indiana.

I first saw him on the outskirts of Monticello along highway 24 looking for a ride. I drove past him thinking, "That old man sure /

looks familiar.” Thinking back to an article and a picture in the Reader’s Digest about the King of the Hoboes, I was fairly certain that this hitchhiker was none other than Steam Train Maury, King of the Hoboes. The white beard, the walking stick, and the pointed hat confirmed my suspicions.

On that day, I gave Steam Train a ride to Kentland. The trip proved to be very enjoyable as I got acquainted with this King of the Hoboes. Since trains had become fewer and less reliable, Steam Train often utilized U. S. 24 in his travel to Britt, Iowa where the National Hobo Convention is held.

Once we arrived in Kentland, I left Steam Train in the shaded area of the Newton County Courthouse thinking that would be the last time I would ever see him.

A few weeks passed when I received a phone call from Steam Train. He was on the west edge of Logansport calling from a pay telephone (remember them?). After a couple of minutes of conversation, Steam Train asked, “Would you like a little company tonight?” I drove to the west side of town, picked him up, and brought him to our home. We had supper and sat in the back yard listening to tales of the road. The next day I took him to the local rail yard where he hopped a train headed east. Thus began several years of friendship with Steam Train Maury Graham.

I took many of the stories Steam Train told about knowing this person or that person with a grain of salt. I know he had been written up in the Reader’s Digest and The Wall Street Journal and that he had appeared on the David Letterman Show. On one occasion Johnny Cash was coming to Logansport to put on a show. According to Steam Train, he and Johnny Cash were friends so he wanted to get to the concert early so he could visit with Mr. Cash. So we took Steam Train up to the concert where he waited outside for Johnny to arrive. Of course the appearance of this peculiar looking man created its own interest to concert goers who were also awaiting the arrival of Johnny Cash. Soon Johnny arrived amid many admirers. As he approached the doors, Steam Train called out, “Hey, Johnny, my man!” Johnny Cash looked around for the voice and said, “Steam Train, is that you?” They visited briefly since the show was about to begin but Steam Train and Johnny got together after the show for a longer visit.

In the fifth grade, students were assigned to write a factual account about an interesting person they had actually met or known. Many students wrote about a grandparent or community person but our son Doug chose to write about Steam Train. Well, the teacher noted that the story was to be factual and about a person he had met, not a fictional character. Steam Train just happened to be visiting at the time so the next day, Steam Train accompanied Doug to school to meet the teacher and the class. Needless to say, this elevated his grade on the essay.

On one visit, Steam Train gave the sermon at our church, the First United Methodist Church in Logansport. He spoke about the life of a hobo and what they believe in. During the service, he also sang a little known song, “I Want to be a Methodist Til I Die.” He knew his Bible and often quoted passages from it.

Steam Train was a World War II veteran who loved his country very much. He has spoken to many classes about this great country

and encouraged students to maintain its beauty by not littering. He was a gentleman through and through. He spoke very well and I never heard him ever use any profanity.

Steam Train passed away November 18, 2006 at the age of 89. His obituary appeared in the New York Times where kings, foreign dignitaries and famous people from coast to coast are remembered. Steam Train had finally “caught the westbound” the term hoboes

use when one of their own dies. One of the legends of the hoboes is that the trip to heaven will be taken aboard the tail of Halley’s

comet. When Halley’s comes back by, the ones who’ve ridden get off to go on to heaven and a new batch of hoboes get their ride on that comet’s tail. Steam Train once said that someday he would be riding that tail himself. “Who knows? Won’t that be something? You can bet it will!”

Steam Train was a traveler, storyteller, an author, a Christian, a veteran and a great friend. He is missed.

Remembering the King Who Was a Welcome Visitor

Editor’s note: On December 20, 2006, John Yost wrote in his column in the Newton County Enterprise a note about Steam Train after seeing his obituary in the LA Times. It has been edited, as John also mentioned facts that were previously written in this article.

“Steam Train Maury frequently passed through Kentland in the late summers of the 1980s as he made his way by his chosen conveyance to Britt, Iowa, for the national hobo festival. Maury was a founding member of the National Hobo Foundation which maintains the Hobo Museum at Britt. Maury made a point of looking me up as he knew a soft touch for lunch or dinner when he saw one.

“Strangely, there is a long-standing connection between newspapers and hobos. Back 50 or 60 years ago there was a tradition of the hobo typesetter. These were men who were adept at operating the Linotype machines, but not cut out for practicing this trade at one paper for very long. My longtime publisher Bill Harper used to tell about hobo typesetters which occasionally were hired by the *Times-Republic* in Watseka. As Bill would tell it, these men would come through town on the train, and if they were out of funds they would hop off the passing freight and seek work at the local newspaper. Invariably they were very skilled at their work; they just lacked the ability to stay in one place for very long.

“A portly gent with a flowing white beard, Maury cut a Santa Claus figure dressed in blue bib overalls and a white tee-shirt. As Maury put it in one interview, “It used to be that a hobo had to be a good naturalist. He had to know all the roots, berries, grasses and weeds that were edible as well as how to catch small animals without weapons and be a good fisherman.

“Maury was a medical technician during WWII, and when he died was survived by his wife of 69 years and two daughters.

“As the hoboes like to say of their departed friends, Maury caught the westbound train.”

have been an act of collusion “brought only to give Bright’s title the respectability of a judicial decree.” Whatever the motive for filing the suit, Bright won and as Darroch put it, “poor Blake, who doubtless never saw Bogus Island, was ousted from it.”

This unusual episode does not end there, however. In 1859 State Auditor John P. Dunn deposited some of the state funds in the Metropolitan Bank of Cincinnati, and shortly thereafter the bank failed. One of Dunn’s bondsmen was Michael G. Bright. He proposed to make up Dunn’s default by turning over to the state enough of the Beaver Lake land he claimed to own. The matter was referred to a legislative committee, which examined the land and Bright’s claim to it, and the committee recommended acceptance of Bright’s offer. The legislature acted to authorize the State Treasurer to accept conveyance of the land. Bright conveyed the land to the state, not in one large chunk, but he conveyed to the state every other 40-acre tract. Bright gave the state the even numbered tracts and retained the odd numbered ones. This created a plat that looked like a checkerboard.

In 1865 the General Assembly passed an act providing for the sale of the state’s tracts of land in the Beaver Lake Country at a price of \$1.50 per acre in the first year and one dollar per acre thereafter. When the state put its tracts of land on the market, Bright did likewise, and between 1865 and 1870 all the lands of Beaver Lake were sold. The flooding of 1869 had widened the original ditch channel to the Kankakee River thereby draining much of Beaver Lake. As a result, when the last of the Bright and state lands were sold in 1870, the land was ready for settlement and improvement. This got underway, but rather than resolving the whole matter of the ownership of the lake bed, it opened the door to further controversy which took an act of Congress to resolve, and even that resolution only opened yet another door to contention over the ownership of this land, setting the stage for the Great Land Raid of 1871.

Darroch provides this account of the next phase on the saga: “The purchaser of these lands never questioned the validity of a title so boldly declared by Bright and so openly dealt in by the State, with full knowledge of its character brought to the minds of the State officers and legislators, and this title was unquestioned until in the year 1871, when the waters had receded, much of the land had apparently become

dry, and when the inhabitants of Beaver Lake felt that the dawn of prosperity had arrived, they awoke one morning to find small board houses on almost every quarter section of the lake bed then dry enough to be occupied, and each of these houses had an occupant.

“A party of raiders, headed by the late Amzie B. Condit and Parker Dresser came from Chicago, and upon the theory that this was government land, they proceeded in the right to take possession of it and preempt it. Suffice it to say that the Beaver Lake settler of that day was not easily disturbed by a small demonstration. The raiders were all arrested, some of them barely escaped being shot, and their board houses were used for barns and cattle sheds

“But this raised the question of the validity of Bright’s title, and the matter was taken to Congress, and an effort was made to have Congress authorize a conveyance direct to the owners of the Bright title. After an exhaustive debate in Congress, this proposition was rejected, but Congress passed an act in 1873 wherein it was provided that the State of Indiana and her assignees, having drained and reclaimed what was known as the bed of Beaver Lake, in Newton County, Indiana, the same (was) then released and quit-claimed to the State of Indiana. This settled the right of preemption, and as the owners believed, settled the title; but in this they were very badly disappointed.

Want to read more about Beaver Lake? The Family History Division of the Newton County Historical Society has republished several local books on this subject. Pick up a copy of [Beaver Lake, Land of Enchantment](#), by Elmore Barce; [Ralph, the Story of Bogus Island](#), or Joseph Hiestand’s [Archeological Report on Newton County, 1951](#).

Coming this summer . . . [The Hoosier Hunting Ground, or the Beaver Lake Trail](#) by Bill Bat, aka John E. Alter. Available at the Resource Center in Kentland.

“In about the year 1879, Jacob B. Julian, then an attorney at Indianapolis, conceived the idea that under the Act of Congress of 1873, the State became the owner of all the lots of land in the bed of Beaver Lake that had not theretofore been conveyed by the State under the Act of 1865. Acting on this belief, he obtained permission from the attorney general to

bring and did bring suit against the owners of these lands. One of these cases was tried, appealed and decided by the State Supreme Court against the holders of the Bright title.

“As soon as this decision was rendered, the owners of the land appealed to the legislature of the State, and in 1889 the legislature, recognizing the strong equities of the then owners of the Bright title, by Act of the General Assembly permitted them to re-enter the land of the State at a nominal price of 37 cents per acre. Thus it was that those who undertook to reclaim the waste of water and worthless land were forced to fight through all sorts of adverse conditions until they, like the land they acquired, became time-tried and fire-tested.”

In concluding his observation on the Beaver Lake story, Darroch offered these thoughts on the pioneers, “Of the early settlers of Beaver Lake and that vicinity, becoming modesty forbids that I should say too much. If they were not, at all time, as good as their more fortunately located neighbors, it is not on account of a lack of good society, for during portions of the year they had for their companions preachers, lawyers, doctors, judges, mayors of cities, governors of states, politicians and statesmen. I will not say, however, that these gentlemen were always on their best behavior when they came to Beaver Lake to hunt and fish. In fact, the conduct of the best of them was often so peculiar that it became proverbial with us that when a man, no matter how good, crossed Beaver Creek on his way to Beaver Lake to hunt or fish, he left much of his respectability there and took it upon his return, if at that time sober enough to do so. Nevertheless, under the influence of these splendid associations, I am satisfied that some progress was made by the early settlers of the Beaver Lake region in the virtues of civilization for as early as 1873, when the late Judge S.P. Thompson of Rensselaer was prosecuting attorney, and the late Charles H. Test was then presiding judge of the Newton Circuit Court, it was then and solemnly and judicially determined that the man who resided in the vicinity of Beaver Lake had a fair, average reputation for honesty and integrity, if he had never been caught stealing.”

In Conclusion

And so we come to the end of the saga of Beaver Lake. The Pottawatomi, the People of the Place of Fire, are gone. Much of the wildlife that abounded in the region is gone. The once-largest lake in the State of

Quill & Ink

Featuring Poetry Written by Newton County Residents

Editor's note: This section of the newsletter is a bit different this time, yet it still deals with Newton County. Bill Herbert, of Goodland, recently published the following bit of prose for the Prairie Writer's Guild fourth volume of From the Edge of the Prairie, following the theme, Music Harmony and Chaos. It is a fictitious story based on fact about a man named Maury, but more well known as Steam Train. Upon offering this local story to Janet Miller for this edition, she related that her brother-in-law, David Miller of Logansport, was a personal friend of Steam Train. His account, as well as one from John Yost, follow's Mr. Herbert's story.

Steam Train

By Bill Herbert

After an overnight stop somewhere between Reynolds and Wolcott, Maury leisurely made his way across the Hoosier state along U.S. 24, heading west toward his destination in Britt, Iowa. After a stop in downtown Remington for a quick bowl of soup for lunch, he made his way on to Kentland. With his long white beard, top hat, walking stick and knapsack, Maury always drew a second look from passers-by. As usual, he could be heard talking to himself as he wandered across the country.

Oh great! My pile of old burlap seed bags is still there just as I left them last year. Make a darned good mattress. Guess no one else sleeps under here. 'Course I'll probably have to share them with some sort of critter. I ain't gonna bother him and pray tell he'd best leave me alone, lest he get cooked over my fire in the mornin'. Looks like the train still uses the tracks up there too. Not too rusty. We both 'been rumblin' through here for many years, longer than I care to remember. This trip gets longer every year. My ole legs ain't gonna take too many more 'o these cross-country trips.

Made my first one in '31, just a boy of 14 years. Sure is good to rendezvous with the other 'boes though. Good ole friends they are. Lost Dakota Bob and Cinci Joe last year. One got run over by a big rig. The other just lay down to go to sleep, closed his eyes, and never woke up; lucky bastard. Think I'll take a quick stroll through town. Maybe some familiar face will show up. Ya know, all these little towns are the same and yet they're real different too. All have a barber shop, and post office, maybe a general store or hardware. Not sure how they make it these days. My pa's old store used to look just like Boonie's place over there.

I've been runnin' the roads and rails for many-a-year. Been kind of a lonely journey. Oh I've had fifteen or sixteen tag-along friends over the years. They were real good company. Never talked too much, but they enjoyed my company as much as I enjoyed theirs. Sometimes their bathroom habits weren't the best. Ralph and Otto got us in trouble more than once. They whizzed on a lady's flower bed and buried their bones in a freshly tilled and planted garden. The owner took a couple 'o shots at us. Lucky he was a bad shot. Sometimes they'd even catch supper for us; rabbits, squirrels, chickens and even an occasional guinea fowl. As they say, dogs are a man's best friend. Met quite a few characters during my travels too. Each one of these little country towns has one or two of 'em. Met John here 'bout ten years ago. He's kind of round like me. Has a beard too. Mine's down to my belly button. His is only a couple of inches long. Once I met a chap named Wib. Talked both of your ears

off. He had three dogs that did lots of tricks. One could even stand on all four paws on a soda can. He made a bit 'o money bettin' on that mutt.

Well I'll be! Is that John comin' down the block? Hey John . . . John, it's SteamTrain Maury . . . can ya hear me, John? Darn it, he went into the store. John and me always stop and visit for a while if we run into each other while I'm passin' through. He's the editor of the paper. We always have some good stories to swap. Had my picture on the front page a couple o' times too! I'll try to catch him in the morning 'fore I leave. Let's see. Oh good! Have enough change for a cup of coffee at the drive-in. They usually have books of matches there. Need some to start a fire this evening.

Maury took off wandering through town towards the local drive-in. Wasn't more than about ten minutes away. Along the way he stopped several times to survey the changes since his last visit.

They always keep the town square here in Kentland real nice. Lots of nice hangin' flower baskets and planters in front of the stores. The homes and yards are real nice too. Kids ridin' their bikes, roller skating and playing catch. Used to do those things when I was a kid. Hmm . . . what's different? Oh! Damn. They tore down half the old school building! Why'd they do that? Seemed to be a perfectly fine building to me. Progress. Ugh! Oh, gotta remember to rummage through the dumpster at the drive-in for an empty ketchup can for heatin' water in. Maybe I can find somthin' good to eat too!

Steam Train sauntered out past the town park, probably planting the fear of the Almighty into the Red Hat Ladies having lunch in the shelter. At the very least, his roly-poly stature, waist-length beard, pointed little hat, walking stick and knapsack handed



online with our officers

Janet Miller, President; Mike Haste, Vice-President; Darlene Truby, Treasurer; Becky Lyons, Secretary
Jim Robbins, Ex-Officio; Sig Boezeman, Member-At-Large; Donna LaCrosse, County Historian

Hello, the Winter *Newcomer* is here! And incidentally so has winter been here! Unfortunately we had to cancel our February meeting due to a "winter storm warning!" Hopefully, spring is just around the corner.

Even though winter has been here, there have been lots of activities happening with the Newton County Historical Society. Our Research Center has been a busy place. Thanks go to members Barbara Wilfong, Jenny Washburn and Beth Bassett for decorating the center in holiday style. We have acquired a new microfilm reader that has sparked much interest. In December we had as visitors, a Home Economics group and their spouses from Brook, with tour guides Larry and Becky Lyons. The Kentland Chamber of Commerce, with nineteen members present, held their regular February meeting at the center with the program conducted by Kyle Conrad. Beth Bassett and Janet Miller were recent guests of the Kentland Rotary Club where they presented a program on the society and its publications.

In October our members were in for a real treat at the monthly meeting. We met at Brook and visited two different businesses. Dave and Judy Wilson showed the group their restored Korean War Medical vehicles and explained the restoration process. Next we visited Farmer's Supply, guests of the Kessler family. Everyone

enjoyed seeing Howard Kessler's collection of antique farm tools and the restored 1930 Model A with an open rumble seat. Our "witchy" members, Gene and Lucille Smith, served us appropriate Halloween treats.

David Herriott of Herriott Stained Glass Studio in Kentland was our program guest for the November meeting. He provided us with stained glass history and restoration techniques.

At the Newton County Government Center in January, Sue Humphrey and Janet Miller presented the program on recent publications of the Family History Division. Soon to be released books will be the Newton County Historical Coloring Book Vol. II and a reprint of Bill Bat's Hoosier Hunting Grounds or the Beaver Lake Trail. A third publication, yet to be decided upon, was discussed for the members input.

Membership Chairman, Beth Bassett, reports a good response to her membership mailing. Keep those memberships coming! A thank-you card that included a NCHS bookmark, devised by Beth, was sent to the members who responded. Thanks to Beth for her membership efforts and ideas.

Stop by our Research Center and get a hands-on close-up look at Newton County history!

RESOURCE CENTER UPDATE

The winter weather has not deterred the activity at the Resource Center. Our faithful volunteers continue to keep our facility open to the public, and each day that we are open we see new visitors from a variety of areas.

We have had many compliments on our building, all of them very positive. Visitors can spend up to an hour just going through our displays, and as they go, they relate to us their particular tie to an item and sharing their family histories.

Several other historical society members from other counties have stopped in to see how we have set up our building, making comments such as "Newton County is leading the way, now we have to step up." How motivating is that?

We have had several new acquisitions. From the James Howell family we received a collection of beautifully framed, color photos of Goodland and South Newton High School students. These cover the last couple of years at Goodland, through 1987 at South Newton. They also have given us just about every sports program from South Newton and each playbill for the South Newton Production Company, copies of both of these school's newspapers, and so much more. We're busy cataloging these items for future displays.

On loan from the Boy Scout Troop 149 are scrapbooks that cover four years of their events. Thanks to Vicki Triplett and Troop 149 for sharing these with us. This troop assisted us in moving our newspaper collections and more to the new site in 2006.

Kathryn Sprinkle has been doing some house cleaning and brought in her collection of Bob Simons items, and added a copy of the *Kentland Centennial* book. Thanks so much Kathryn.

Our new microfilm reader has opened a new window of research for members and visitors alike. The purchase of the *Goodland Herald*, and *Lake Village Villager* microfilm can now be viewed, printed, and digitally archived. I invite you to stop in and try it out!

As members who attend our society meetings know, we film each program speaker for posterity sake. Recently, some that we recorded on VHS tape have been converted to a DVD. Barbara and Lynn Wilfong generously donated a television set, and we have plans to purchase a VHS/DVD player. Just another way that we can share our history with others.

New display cases have been purchased, and a special thank you goes out to Ron Humphrey for finding them, and to Rich Miller and Dave Smart for their efforts in picking up these cases and delivering them to center. We have a great team of volunteers.

Perhaps you are doing some spring cleaning and have decided to clear out some Newton County items, bring them by, we'd love to see them before you toss them away.

Stop in and see us soon . . . we'd love to share our history with you. - Beth Bassett, Resource Center Chair



310 E. Seymour, Kentland, Indiana

Member observations

Society member David Dye of Goodland sent over an email to me upon reading the most recent issue of The Newcomer. He identified the Doland Garage in one of the French family photographs. He submitted these comments:

"Great article! In the latest Newcomer printed, you have an article about the French family. In that article is a picture of Doland's Garage.

"Doland's Garage used to be west of the present bank building, which is now the parking lot. Doland was the "D" in the Aitchandee (H and D) Company that I think invented shock absorbers for automobiles in Goodland.

"The "H" is for Hawn. See the item on ebay #6525941638 - it is a 1916 ad for that product.

"Later the building was part of the Tulip Straw factory where they made soda straws during W.W. II. After that, before it burned, it was the Drackett Company where they made Vanish bathroom cleaner. Just a little history for you.

"And by the way, I donated the elementary school yearbooks to the library after my father passed away. He was a custodian at the school. (Note: a reference was made to these yearbooks in the French family history.) David L. Dye, Goodland, Indiana"

Well, I just couldn't pass up the opportunity to find a Newton County item on ebay, so I did a search for the item David mentioned, and there it was, and now it is mine! I won the auction, and have reproduced it here. I've attempted to find information regarding the Aitchandee Garage, Harry Hawn and C.A. Doland, but have not had much success. The Goodland centennial publication One Hundred Years of Good Life in a Good Land, 1861-1961, did have this history:

"Andrew Hawn and C. A. Doland formed a partnership in Goodland in 1913 called the H. and D. Co., where a shock absorber for Model T. Ford automobiles was manufactured and marketed.

"The shock absorber was invented by Mr. Hawn and a U. S. patent was obtained in 1914. The company began operating in 1913 in the Bringham building, now occupied by the Main Garage, with Mrs. John S. McCurry as secretary. The business expanded and moved to larger quarters in the Doland Garage. This was the major industry in Goodland and employed 50 to 60 persons. These shock absorbers were sold all over the United States and Canada.

"The H. and D. Co. was sold in 1921

and moved to Crawfordsville, Indiana."

Mr. Dye also submitted this story regarding a family artifact and an encounter with ebay.com.

Lottie's Marbles

by David L. Dye

When I was very young, I became aware of an object in our home that drew a great deal of my interest. It was a large black and white marble, just like the one shown at right. When I became older I asked my mother just what it was and what it was all about.

Mother told me that the marble had been given to her at the time

David Dye of Goodland
Shares Newton County History

Submitted by Beth Bassett

JANUARY 6, 1916 MOTOR AGE 59



See How the Body Stays Level

Ford Owners: Here Is Real News!

This is to herald the sale of the 50,000th Aitchandee Shock Absorber, before our invention is a year old. Such spontaneous recognition by 50,000 Ford owners means that we have discovered a shock absorber that is destined to take first rank. It means, too, that maybe you are missing something that should be yours.

The growth of Aitchandee popularity has been like a comet—one owner having them has made a dozen men eager. Sales have climbed and climbed—and we know the reason. Our new principle—that is the answer. Until you know it, and ride in a car with Aitchandee Shock Absorbers, you do not realize what joys can be yours.

Aitchandee Shock Absorbers
For Fords Price \$10.00

There are many, many leading advantages to be found in Aitchandee Shock Absorbers. Chief of them are:

1. Aitchandee is the original shock absorber with the true cantilever principle.
2. Aitchandee is the only one that has the long sought different tension between the upward and downward thrust.
3. Aitchandee absolutely prevents breakage of springs because of special, added resiliency.
4. Aitchandee is the only one that is practically invisible. It does not mar the appearance of the car.
5. Aitchandee is easy to attach. No holes to bore. Everything is furnished to complete the job.

Our cantilever principle removes those "side-slaps" and thrusts which make steering hard over rough roads or at high speed.

The price of the Aitchandee Shock Absorbers is now \$10.00 all over America—last year it was \$15. But our enormously increased volume lets us cut the price this year. Even with numerous improvements.

"For the life of your car"—that is the strong guarantee we put behind Aitchandee Shock Absorbers.

Ask your dealer today to show you Aitchandee Shock Absorbers and arrange to have them put on your car. You'll be happier. Or write to us for complete information and name of nearest dealer. Today.

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We have an interesting profit sharing proposition for wide awake dealers in open territory. Write us today for particulars.

When Writing to Advertisers, Please Mention Motor Age

> Pages of the Past - continued from page 14

started. The fire district is on the north side of main street and at the west end of the business portion. The losers, as nearly as we could ascertain were Peter Hope, building, \$1,500; McDonald & Russell, restaurant, \$800; John Dowling, building, \$2,000; Mrs. Mark Peterson, building, \$1,500; H. S. Irwin, harness and implements, \$1,000; John Hanly, photograph gallery, \$500; Radeke Brewing Co, building, \$800; Bell and Atkins, barber shop, \$200; Isaac T. Purdy, building, \$500, and meat market stock, \$700. A number of other buildings and stocks were damaged but to what extent we are unable to say. J. D. Kessler & Co.'s large stock was piled in the street and greatly damaged by both fire and water. Dr. Recher's fine plate glass front on the opposite side of the street was totally demolished. Graves and Martin also met with similar bad luck. Prosecuting

Attorney Graves had his fine library and new office furniture carried out by the fire fighters with the usual results. The Purdy building was the last of the landmarks of the old Morocco, built before the war, but it was built to stay. An effort was made to blow it up with dynamite but succeeded only in blowing the windows out. We understand that with the exception of Hope, Peterson and Irwin, the property destroyed was partly covered by insurance.

Lake Village

J. J. Wilson of Lake Village was in Kentland Tuesday and informed us that it was his expectation to increase the output of his pickle factory this year, as the acreage of pickles planted would be much greater this season. He says the Village has a fine new toll station, and is connected with the outer world by the Bell telephone company.

Railroad Grade Builders, 1906



"In the above picture, that was taken in 1906, sixteen mule and horse teams and their drivers can be seen, building the sub-grade one fourth mile north of Ade, west of Old U.S. 41, for the Chicago, Indiana and Southern Railroad, which later became a part of the New York Central Railroad system. The teams are pulling wheel scrapers and slip scrapers. Early in 1905 a surveyor was sent to this area to survey for the new road. During his stay he lived at the home of Mr. and Mrs. Marvin Archibald, Morocco. Once work was started, the crew of 35 to 40 men lived in a barn near their work at the farm home of Steve Lydel. Mr. and Mrs. James Lewsader, Morocco, were the cooks and a regular cook car was supplied by the railroad company. A good team of mules at that time cost \$400 to \$200 a head. The mule teams were owned by the contractor. The horses were owned by their drivers. A man with a team of horses was paid \$3.50 per day.

"This group build one and one half miles of grade for the new railroad, working on the project approximately eight weeks. The first passenger train over the road made its first run in 1907. James Hale was the conductor and superintendent on the job. The man in the straw hat at the right front is George Flowers, Morocco, whose work was dumping the scrapers. The driver of the first team of mules is John Linten. Neal Atkinson and Case Broderick were also drivers; Shob Broderick helped everywhere in many different capacities, all of Morocco. There are two Russians in the crew, who could not speak or understand English. The Enterprise obtained the above picture for use through the courtesy of Mr. and Mrs. Clarence Holley, East Carroll Street, Kentland. The picture was loaned to this office by the owner, George Flowers, who also supplied the information for the same." - Newton County Enterprise.

Pages of the Past

For 1908: The *Enterprise* goes to its large family of readers this week in a new form, printed on a new press, and the first issue gotten out in its new home. The patent "insides," as they are styled, have been discarded, and hereafter the entire paper will be edited and printed at home, and its pages will be wholly devoted to the interests of the people and industries of Newton County. We trust our readers will appreciate the change, and give us their support. We hope to make the new *Enterprise* the best home paper published in northern Indiana, and will introduce several new features during the year looking to its improvement.

Kentland

The rains of a few days ago further demonstrated the fact that Kentland is sadly in need of a sewage system.

Jones & Fry are closing out their stock of general merchandise at a special sale now in progress, preparatory to quitting business. L. W. Ross & Son have purchased the store building occupied by Jones & Fry.

R. Lemmon, photographer, Kentland. Preferred time, until five o'clock on clear days and until three o'clock on cloudy days.

Big Stock Sale, at our place of business in Kentland: 35 head of mules and 10 head of horses. Schuh & Sons.

This vicinity is pretty effectively wrapped in the throes of the grippe, and everyone is sneezing between blows, and coughing and grunting for accompaniment.

William Collins, who is visiting his old home in England, writes his wife that he is having a splendid visit with relatives and friends, and is enjoying himself immensely. He has seen the sun but once and expresses a strong desire to get back home. He expects to sail on the return trip in a few days.

Annual Meeting: The Horse Thief Detective Association will hold its annual meeting at the Court House in Kentland Saturday evening at half past seven o'clock. All members are requested to be present. A. D. Washburn, President; T. B. Cunningham, Secretary.

Bank of Kentland: The Bank of Kentland has been examined under the new law and approved by the Auditor of State, and designated a depository for public funds. Geo. D. Rider, Owner.

Will Littlejohn made an exhibit of corn at Purdue last week and came home with

several good-sized feathers in his cap. He carried off first prize for the best ten ears of yellow corn grown in northern Indiana, first prize on the best single ear of corn, and capped the climax by winning sweepstakes. Will is not the only progressive young farmer in Newton county, but he was the only one with faith and courage enough to enter the contest, and he deserves the thanks of our people for thus showing to the world what can be done in Newton county.

A new line of town view postcards in book form for 10 cents at Healy's drug store.

Brook

Brook Girls Take Advantage of Leap Year. No sooner had Leap Year been ushered in than the girls proceeded to show the boys a good time by giving a dance Wednesday night. An enjoyable time is reported.

Brook Lands Another Factory. The contract for the new overall and shirt factory was let to Worrel, Cory & Adair. This is to be a brick building 60 by 130 feet, with all the modern conveniences. The power is to be furnished by electricity. The new electric light and power house is to be built soon also. Both are expected to be ready not later than July first. The construction of these buildings will be done entirely by Brook men. The prospects are good for a busy year.

Electric lights have been put in the Christian Church, which greatly increases the comfort and convenience.

Conrad

Grover Bowman was on hand at the January Meeting of the Newton County Commissioners asking for a license to continue the sale of the mountain dew he has been handing out to the thirsty for the past year. Bowman's saloon is located at Conrad, and Platt Conrad was present to testify that Bowman's place was like an annex to a Sunday school room. The Board was so impressed that a license was granted.

Mission Organized. A meeting held at Conrad Saturday to discuss the religious interest of that community was well attended, and it was decided to organize the Mission of Conrad, which was done by electing W. R. Kerr, chairman; Miss Minnie Thompson, secretary; and Mrs. Jennie M. Conrad, treasurer. These together with Andrew Thompson and J. Wolgamuth to

Transcribed by Janet Miller

Excerpts taken from *The Newton County Enterprise, Winter, 1908*

form the executive committee with power to act in the direction of the Sabbath School and religious worship. The committee was also instructed to take the preliminary steps toward the erection of a church building. Arrangements were also made to have a series of meetings in the near future conducted by Evangelist Heydenburk. Rev. I. M. Houser of Indianapolis, synodical superintendent of Sunday school missions, was present and assisted in the organization.

Goodland

The public school building at Goodland was totally destroyed by fire Tuesday evening (January 21, 1908). The building was a substantial brick structure, and was built by the town and township as a joint graded school about twenty years ago, at a cost of about \$25,000. Since then improvements have been made and much furniture and a heating plant has been added. We understand there was \$10,000 insurance on the building and contents. Fortunately the fire occurred after school was dismissed, else in the crowded conditions of the schools there might have been a sadder story to tell. The fire originated in the basement, but no one seems to have a reasonable conjecture as to how it started. A new and larger building will be erected as soon as possible, but whether it will be a joint school or not our informant was unable to say.

Morocco

Yesterday the County Clerk issued his first marriage license since Christmas, to Allen M. Robertson and Sarah Gorman, both of Beaver township. Clerk Hess is very much discouraged over the outlook and is thinking seriously of offering a premium to applicants in the hope of increasing the demand.

A fire occurred at Morocco Sunday night (January 26, 1908) destroying five buildings in the business part of town and causing a loss of about ten or twelve thousand dollars. The fire is supposed to have started in the Hope restaurant, and no doubt purely accidental. The lack of waterworks or apparatus of any kind to fight fires makes it almost a miracle that the whole business section was not consumed. The high winds scattered fire brands all over the town and it was only by the most heroic and persistent efforts that the flames were confined to the row of buildings in which it <



Lottie's Marbles as shown on ebay.

that her grandmother, Ruth Ann Champley Peck, had passed away in 1947. I was 6 years old at the time and remember Ruth Ann and what a frail little woman she was. Ruth Ann had told my mother before passing that the marble was "Lottie's marble" and she was to have it when she was gone. Ruth stated that she had received it when Lottie had passed away when Ruth was a very small girl being born in 1861. We had never asked anyone or figured out just who this Lottie was and forgot about it for several years.

In the mid to late 70's my mother had her very first yard sale and did quite well as I remember. During the sale, a man came to her and asked if she had any old marbles. She answered yes and went into the house to retrieve the golf ball sized piece of glass.

Upon seeing the treasure, he immediately offered mother the sum of \$10.00 which she readily accepted.

In the recent past, I have delved into my family tree and have come up with some interesting discoveries. One being that Ruth Ann's grandmother was named Charlotte Lawson Champley and was born in 1788 in England and died in Oxford, Indiana between 1860 and 1870. I am thinking that the Lottie in the story is Charlotte, my great-great-great grandmother.

After the marble was sold, I forgot about it for several years until in September of 2007 I saw the exact same marble being offered on Ebay. I followed the sale till it was over. When it sold it went for nearly \$900.00. It was described as a black and white clam broth marble, probably hand made in Germany in the 1800's.

Getting Family Memories

Submitted by David Dye

My mother, Anna Paulus, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Bernard Paulus came to Goodland in 1863 and settled in the Weishaar neighborhood near the Iroquois river. My father, Henry Getting came to Goodland in the early seventies and was the village blacksmith for a few years. They were the first couple to be married in the Lutheran church. They lived for a few years in Illinois and returned in 1888. He again was blacksmith and William Rice was wood maker making many wagons, tongues, plows, etc. My father retired in 1912 and moved to Michigan and then back to Watseka, Illinois where he passed away in 1932 at the age of 83. My mother then moved to Kentland and passed away in 1954 at the age of 97. When my mother came to Goodland she said the depot was in the old elevator and buildings were scarce. Most were on the north side of the railroad. I believe the old Blue Front is now occupied by the factory and Tom Gray hardware (now removed). When we came back to Indiana in 1888 Goodland was a typical country town. I can remember some of the business people: Restaurants, Jim Johnson and Bela Kent; stores, Bringham Brothers, Rufus Jacobs and Z.F. Little; harness-makers, Henry Brook and Charley Dunkle; butchers, Henry Butler and Peter Buch; Lawyers, Dwight Babcock; Doctors, Clymer and Humston; saloon, Charles Case and blacksmith, John Poulson. The Churches, Lutheran; Methodist, Nimrod Jenkins, pastor; Presbyterian, the Rev. McCain; Baptist, the Rev. Huston. Livery Stable, John Sapp, Poultry House, Al Patton; hardware, Tom Gray, Hiram Burgess, druggist; The Goodland Herald, Al Kitt. John Cooke was pharmacist for Mr. Burgess - by Sophia (Getting Hazel) (13 Jul 1877-9 Jul 1970).

(Editor's note: David has discovered many interesting facts and photographs by utilizing the internet. Look for more information he has found in upcoming issues. Thanks David!)

One of the Older Homes in Goodland



Two views of the old Sheldon House, which is now the Gerts Funeral Home in Goodland. Shown is Minnie Sheldon (1903-1990) and her mother, Katherine E. (Murray) Sheldon, 1861-1943. The photo on the right shows a much older version of the same house in horse and buggy days. Subjects unknown. Photos courtesy of Kate (Sheldon) DeWees.

Historic note: Katherine E. Murray married Silas Sheldon in LaSalle County, Illinois on November 7, 1883. When Silas' father, Benjamin Sheldon, was 34 years old, he lost his life and his fortune in gold when the SS Central America sank during a hurricane in 1857, off the coast of South Carolina. The wreckage was located in 1986 and the gold recovered. The total worth of the ship's gold was estimated to be 450 million dollars. - Contributed by David Dye.

HOME *is where your story begins*

submitted by Beth Bassett

Who was the Turkey Lady?

Mary Esther (Sage) Cooper, who we knew as Esther, was a schoolteacher in her maiden years. In 1919, she married Wilbert Cooper, whose family homestead was located 1 ¼ mile south of Foresman in Newton County. The newlyweds moved into a new home located just around the corner from that homestead.

Esther had written "Southeast Iroquois News" column for the *Brook Reporter* for several years. She was a lifetime resident of Newton County, a graduate of Goodland High School, she attended Winona Lake Teachers College and taught two years at Union School in Jasper County. She was a member of the Brook United Methodist Church and the Fountain Park Art Colony.

Wilbert and Esther had eight children, and from 1926-1960, at least one of the Cooper kids was in the Foresman and Brook school system. Esther passed away in September of 1977 and is buried beside Wilbert at the Riverside Cemetery in Brook, Indiana.

The story of Mary Esther (Sage) Cooper's adventures in poultry raising was published in the *Brook, Iroquois, Washington Township Sesquicentennial Collection, 2006*, written by her son, Roy Cooper of Foresman. Her occupation was not a unique experience, as many families throughout our county raised different types of poultry for their own use as well as a means of extra income for the household. That being the main reason for re-publishing it here, as many of our readers, myself included, can relate to Roy's eyewitness account of his mother's interaction with our feathered friends.

A complete family history appeared in the Summer, 2006 edition of *The Newcomer*, as well as in the aforementioned history book.

The Turkey Lady
by Roy Cooper

By the 1940's baby chicks could be purchased from a hatchery in Rensselaer so Esther's incubator was retired to the attic.

Along with raising more laying hens she also started raising special meatier chickens (broilers) for sale to the poultry meat trade.

At about the same time period, she started buying baby turkey poults to raise

for the poultry meat trade also. To try to get more of the full value from the grown turkeys, she started to try to develop and establish a market for them. By calling friends and neighbors, advertising in the local papers and contacting the various surrounding locker plants she was able to start a dressed turkey market for the Thanksgiving and Christmas holiday seasons.

She started with about 100 turkeys in the early 1940's. The baby turkey poults were purchased in the early spring. They were raised in a brooder house with electric heaters and heat lamps to keep the baby poults warm as they grew in size and grew feathers to keep them warm.

As they grew bigger and pretty well feathered-out, and as the warmer summer season arrived, they were allowed to spend some time outside the brooder house. A special wire cage, a sort of sun porch was placed next to the brooder house. A window was then opened, and the young turkeys could go out into the "sun porch", if they chose to do so, and the weather was nice. They could go back into the brooder house whenever they chose to do so. In this manner, they grew accustomed to being outside. A sudden rain storm however could reek havoc, as the turkeys would all huddle up together in a big pile and literally drown right there, instead of going back into the brooder house.

On several occasions we lost a few this way. Had we not rushed out in the rain to get them back inside, we would have lost a lot more of the panic-stricken turkey poults. We soon learned it was best, to go drive the turkeys in off of their "sun-porch" before the rain started to fall, if possible.

By mid June, the young turkeys were all "feathered out" and weighed about 4 or 5 pounds each.

By then we had cut and "put up" the first cutting of hay.

We then took some portable roosts, some feed troughs and a big water fountain out into the middle of the hay field.

We loaded the young turkeys into a portable wire cage, on wooden runners, and thus transported the young turkeys to their new home, the hay field.

Their new home was a 10-acre, strip of clover, alfalfa, and timothy hay that was

about 100 yds. long and surrounded on both sides by fields of corn, with the corn plants about "knee-high" at that time. We took feed and water to the turkeys twice a day. The feed consisted of growing mash, mixed with our own oats and shelled corn.

The turkeys would spend the day eating feed from the feed troughs and would also roam the fields in search of grasshoppers, crickets, and such.

During the heat of the day they could be found relaxing in the shade of the corn stalks.

They roosted up off of the ground, on the roosts we had provided. This helped to keep them away from most predators, such as foxes or "stray dogs".

The young turkeys grew rapidly on this range type environment and as Thanksgiving neared, the male "tom turkeys" weighed 25-40 pounds each. The female "hen turkeys" weighed from 12-22 pounds.

Though we did raise some white and some red turkeys, most of our turkeys were



Wilbert and Esther (Sage) Cooper

The Foresman Turkey Lady

the dark brown, Broad Breasted Bronze turkeys that had lots of white meat.

By early November we started getting orders from various churches and organizations who were having turkey suppers as "fund raisers". They would often take 5-10 turkeys in one order. We had a shed set up with an electric hot water tank to dip and soak the slaughtered turkey in, to loosen the feathers up for removing.

After the bird was thoroughly soaked, we then put him over the picking machine to take the feathers off. The "turkey picker" as we called it, was a sort of table mounted on legs, so it was about waist high. In the center of this metal tabletop were several slots about an inch wide and one foot long. Mounted underneath this metal top, was a metal cylinder with rubber fingers protruding in rows around it. The rubber fingers protruded up through the slots on the tabletop. When the machine was turned on, the rubber fingers would rapidly revolve through the slots, with about 1 inch of the fingers above the slots.

As the picker operator lowered the turkey over the moving rubber fingers the soggy feathers would be knocked off. By skillfully moving the bird back and forth across the rubber fingers, most of the feathers could be removed, without bruising the meat. Some of the big wing and tail feathers still had to be pulled by hand. Sometimes there would also be a few "pin-feathers" to be removed by hand.

After we had the turkey picked, we took it into the kitchen where Mom would finish the "dressing operation" by removing the entrails and the feet.

The finished product was then immersed in a tank of ice water to cool the body down. Sometime later the birds were removed from the ice water, allowed to drain, then packaged into a plastic bag and placed in a cold room, till the customer came for it.

With Dad (Wilbert) in charge of the slaughter, and Richard and I in charge of the picking, we could handle about 50 birds in

one day.

With Mom, (Esther) in charge of the dressing the birds, and my sisters Joan, Kay and Joyce helping, it was quite a family operation.

Often we would have over 100 birds to do just before Thanksgiving and just before Christmas.

Mom and the girls would often meet the various customers at the locker plants to deliver their turkey to them. She became known as the "Turkey Lady" in most of those towns.



Richard, Jean, Roy, Esther and Kay with the turkeys in 1945-46.

Some people would come to the farm and buy a live turkey to take home and dress themselves, but generally only about one time. They found out that it was much easier to have the "Turkey Lady" dress it for them.

Most years we raised 500-1000 turkeys. We generally dressed 500-600 depending on our orders. Any extra turkeys were sold live, to local produce men in Goodland and Rensselaer.

On year as the Christmas season neared, we knew we would have some extra turkeys.

Our next-door neighbors decided to buy some and take them up to the Sale Barn at Lowell just before Christmas. Murt Harrington was a livestock "wheeler-dealer" and he figured he could auction them off for Christmas presents, and make some money off those "city folks". We loaded 50 turkeys into his enclosed livestock truck, the day before the sale. Murt took them up to Lowell Sale Barn, the night before the sale.

When he got there he realized that he had a slight problem. The open pens, where they penned the cattle and hogs and sheep

for sale, would not hold the turkeys that could fly out.

After much thought and discussion it was found that the sale ring arena was the only place fully enclosed.

It was finally decided that Murt would back up to one of the sale arena doors and unload the turkeys right into the sale ring. Then they would have to auction them off at the start of the sale, the next morning. Thus it was that they unloaded the turkeys that night turned off the lights and everyone went home, satisfied that they had made a good decision. The next morning, when the sale crew started arriving, they realized they had a problem. The turkeys that were used to "roosting" found the rafters of the sale arena to be a good roosting place. To make matters worse, there were "turkey droppings" on most of the bleacher seats of the arena.

As the sale crowd began to arrive, there was much laughter along with some concern. As the turkey auction began the auctioneer announced that you could buy 1 or as many as you want, and you could pick the ones you wanted.

Since most of the turkeys were still up on the rafters, it became quite a comedy of errors as the sale ring crew tried to catch a certain bird that had just been auctioned off. Finally in exasperation the sale manager called a halt to the "turkey auction" with several turkeys still flying around in the rafters. Apparently that night, after the regular sale was finished, a local produce man was called to come and get the rest of the turkeys. With the lights turned off and using only flashlights, the sale barn crew was able to catch the last turkey.

Murt Harrington never tried that again.

Esther Cooper stayed in the turkey business through 1957, so Roy's new wife, Avalynne, got to help out a couple of years.

By then however, the meat inspection rules were changing drastically, so the Coopers decided it was probably a good time to quit. With Mom & Dad nearing retirement age it made good sense and Roy and Avalynne didn't object. Thus ended the "Turkey Lady" regime.