



# The Blackford-Wells Tracer

## A Newsletter of the Blackford-Wells Genealogy Society

Volume 3

October 1998

Number 3

### President's Corner

Fall has once again arrived in Indiana. I hope each of you will take an afternoon to take a little drive. In Blackford County I find that a drive through the Godfrey Reserve particularly beautiful, and in Wells County Quabache State Park is open for visitors.

Our next BWGS meeting is Saturday, November 21st at the Bluffton Library. It will be the annual meeting with the election of officers. There are many really exciting things happening at our meetings so I hope each of you will make an effort to be with us on the 21st at 10:00 a.m.

*Lynn Elliott*

### Minutes from our July Meeting

The meeting was opened in regular form with 20 members being present, on July 18, 1998.

Minutes of the previous meeting were read and the Treasurer's report was given. It was reported that our Federal Identification number for future applications for Not-for-Profit status has been received.

The Handbooks have been completed and distributed.

A report of the Nominating Committee was given with the following being nominated: Vice President, Lucille Reidy; Treasurer, Jack Wilson; and Secretary, Blanch Bennett.

A discussion was held concerning the need for a listing of cemeteries in Wells County with their addresses. Several members will be working on gathering this information for presentation at the September meeting.

A discussion was also held concerning the availability of Life Memberships in BWGS. Virginia Wittwer volunteered to look into this and give a recommendation on a dollar amount for this type of membership.

The next meeting will be held September 19, 1998, at the Brass Latch.

The meeting closed with the Mizpah Benediction.

.....  
"....and the class of '57 had it's dreams..."

Do any of you remember that old Statler Brothers hit? Do you ever wonder what happened to the Class of '57? Listed here are names of members of the Class of '57 from Petroleum High School in Wells County and the Class of '57 from Montpelier High School. If anyone reading this was a member of either of those two classes or knows someone who was, in our next newsletter we would like to do a feature article on that person(s). Please submit your article to the Editor, Lillie Harris, at 1286 E 1000 S, Keystone, IN 46759. We would like to make this section a regular feature with a different year and different schools from Blackford and Wells Counties each newsletter.

**Petroleum High School:** Donald Addington, Janice Bates, George Carnes, Phyllis Ellison, Judy Gerber, Mary Jane Grimm, Jill Harshman, Don Murray, Don Okey, Jerry Risser, Pauline Ramseyer, Carol Taylor, and Carol Williams.  
**Montpelier High School:** Gerald Baker, William Bales, Phyllis Bergdoll, Mary Buckmaster, Jackie Cain, Betty Carnes, Judith Caylor, Carol Clements, Raymond Coffield, Carol Denton, Carolyn Enochs, Roger Falk, Janet Fear, Mary Ford, Harold Glatti, John Glessner, Nancyanna Duncan, Ted Harold, Jerry Hart, Linda Hooks, Beverly King, Carl King, Thomas Krebs, Joe Kyle, Carol Lautzenheiser, Nila Marshall, Larry Miles, Gary Overmeier, Terry Overmeier, Richard Payne, Howard Pence, Betty Racer, Floy Smith, Sue Ann Stukey, Karen Trussel, Glen Weaver, James Winger, Shirley Winters, and Ann Yadon.

### What you'll find in this issue...

President's Corner  
Minutes from our July and September meetings  
Class of '57  
Feature Article: Joseph S. & Sarah E. Guthrie Bulger  
Jay-Wells Balbec Area Hails History Snatched From Gunman  
Box in Courthouse Cornerstone Opened  
Manning Family Genealogy Forum  
Furniture Makers in Wells and Blackford Counties, 1793-1850  
Jose: Is that Joseph, Josiah, or Josephus?  
Answer of "Tara"

*Snow Cemetery*

## Joseph S. & Sarah E. Guthrie Bulger

My great grandfather was Joseph S. Bulger who was born in Shenandoah County, VA 15 June 1815, the son of Edward and Catherine Bulger. He married 9 Jul 1840 Sarah Guthrie who was born 18 March 1820. At a very young age he removed with his parents and brother Wilson Moore Bulger to Taylorsville, Muskingum, County Ohio. They came to Wells County, In. about 1840. They were living in Rockcreek twp. at the time of Joseph's death in 1863. Sometime after his death his wife Sarah moved to Bluffton, IN where she lived with her son Thomas until she died in 1873. Joseph and Sarah were the parents of eight children: David Edward; Henry Courtney; Thomas Martin; Mary Melisa; Joseph S; Clara Bulger Keesling; Kate Bulger Fisher, it is believed Kate had a son Harry and a grandson Paul.

For Wilson Bulger, brother of Joseph S., early opportunities for an education were somewhat limited, but being possessed of a quick keen, bright intellect and an ambition to acquire knowledge he overcame and equipped himself well for business. Among his accomplishments, he was a skilled pensman and much of the conveyancing in Wells County for fifty years was prepared by him in his handwriting. He was elected county recorder four times.

My grandfather Thomas Martin Bulger, son of Joseph S. Bulger, was born near Murray, IN 25 June 1848. The 19th of January 1881 he married Ameret Isophene Davis, daughter of William P. Davis & Lucinda Richey, born 23 January 1850 in Wells Co. William P. was born in Green Co., TN, moving to Wells Co., IN in 1836 where there were no roads, only heavy forests and rough prairies. The first wedding in Wells Co. was that of Rebecca Davis & Robert Simison. Rebecca was a sister of William P. Davis. Thomas Martin Bulger died 23 January 1924 and his wife Ameret died 5 Apr 1940, both are buried in the Fairview Cemetery at Bluffton, IN. *Snow Cemetery*

*Chester Twp*

My grandfather started the Bulger Trucking Company as a Dray line about 1880. From a single wagon truck he enlarged the business and motorized it. It was one of the cities business firms for over 75 years. Thomas Martin Bulger served two terms as City Councilman.

Thomas and his wife Ameret Isophene were the parents of two sons, Milton Claire and William Daily (Dail). William was a partner in the Bulger Trucking Co. most of his adult life and retired in 1945, after which his son Thomas and son's operated the business for several years.

My father, William Daily (Dail) Bulger was born 3 June 1887 in Wells Co. He married 17 September 1910 Ethel Ora Jarrett, daughter of William Bently Jarrett & Jane Fuller Sills, born in Kosciusko Co., IN 3 Oct 1888. William (Dail) died 20 October 1954 and Ethel died 1 January 1952. They are both buried in the Fairview Cemetery in Bluffton, IN.

The Jarretts were among the early settlers of Chester Township, Wells Co. William Bently Jarrett, son of Bently & Emaline Tate Jarrett was born 19 Oct 1854 & died 1 Apr 1929. Jane Fuller married 1st Daniel Sills. She was the daughter of John Shubert Fuller & Mary Godfrey of the Miami Indian Godfreys, born 4 Jan 1853 in Darke Co., OH. She died 24 July 1898. William and Jane are both buried in the Snow Cemetery, Wells County, IN.

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In 1924 my parents, William (Dail) & Ethel, bought a farm in Liberty twp, Wells Co, however, not liking country living they moved back to Bluffton in 1930 where he continued the Trucking business. As a child I remember my Grandmother (Mrs. Thomas Bulger) living in our home after the death of my grandfather. She was a former school teacher and would help all of us children with our homework. We would all gather around her to hear the stories she had to tell about "the old days". My parents had 6 children: Thomas, who died in 1981; Robert, Roger, William B., who married Thelma List; Jane who married 1st Roland Patterson, 2nd Floyd Schoeff; and Mary, who married Weisell Uptgraft. Weisell was born 17 Nov 1917 & died 19 May 1986. Their children were: Janice (Mrs. Douglas) Beaty; Sheila (Mrs William Fenton; Laura (Mrs. Nick Chaney) and James.

Submitted by Mary Bulger Uptgraft



## ANNOUNCEMENTS

A workshop, "Writing and Publishing Your Family History" will be presented by the Allen County Genealogical Society on Saturday October 31, 1998 from 9:00 A.M to 3: P.M. in Room 4 of the Main Library , 900 Webster Street, Fort Wayne, IN. Cost \$10.00. Any questions, call Margery Graham at 219-672-2585. Mail reservations to Writers Workshop, P.O. Box 12003, Fort Wayne, In. 46862. Make check payable to Allen County Genealogical Society.

## QUERY

A request for help to find more Carmi Kelly ancestry. Carmi lived most of his life in Caledonia, Ohio, was the second child of Jeremiah Kelly. The last child of Jeremias's 14 children was Ray Kelly, who was the father of my mother, Maxine (Kelly) Roberts. Arthur Kelly, son of Carmi, died June 1934 in Bluffton. He married 1895 to Anna Margaret Dougherty in Tocsin. Also, Arthur's younger brother, Chalmers Kelly married Rachel Dougherty; there was no record of their marriage in Ohio, but I suspect Anna and Rachel are sisters and Rachel was married in Tocsin. I would really appreciate you locating the marriage record of Arthur Kelly and Anna Dougherty, their obituaries or death notices, cemetery records, and the names of their children, also the marriage record of Chalmers and Rachel. Mr. Terry Roberts, 17928 East Amherst Ave., Aurora, CO. 80013.

## CORRECTION

Roberta M. Chapman (MS), 495 Yeagy Road, Greenwood, IN. 46142-7286, Phone 317-887-2618. Researching: Wells- Huntington County Area Colbert, Ewart, and Foust.

## NEW MEMBERS

Brian W. Williams, 5400 E. 21st #1311, Wichita, KS. 67208-1643  
Nellie Sleepy, 6632 South Meridian Road, Poneto, IN. 46781

Dear Lord:

So far today, I've done alright. I haven't gossiped, haven't lost my temper, haven't been greedy, grumpy, nasty, selfish, or over-indulgent, and I'm very thankful to you for that.

But in a few minutes, God, I'm going to get out of bed, and from that moment on, I'm probably going to need a lot more help!

Amen.

## Jay-Wells balbec Area Hails History Snatched From Gunman at Toledo

By Jim Barbieri, dated March 22, 1985

For three or four days, it was the top area story, claiming big headlines in the Toledo Blade of urban Toledo, Ohio. It was over the strange recovery there in a gun episode of a historical marker relating events of the Civil War era - an 18 inch square, 2 inch thick marble slab marker, obviously taken from a monument.

A white Toledo area man allegedly had pulled a sawed-off shotgun when his car was halted under suspicious circumstances by a university policeman at Toledo. In that car was found this marble plaque, which was pictured in a large photo appearing in the Toledo Blade. It read:

"A station of the underground railroad. Tradition says Eliza Harris of Uncle Tom's Cabin fame rested here in her flight to Canada." Where did it come from? Nedra Hoover, a Toledo area woman formerly from the Balbec area saw the newspaper and came forth. She thought it might be from a cemetery marker in her former Hoosier location, which she reportedly understood now to be a "defunct town," police said.

Jay County Deputy Sheriff Dave Swoveland began an investigation when his department was contacted by Toledo about a possible cemetery plaque recovery. While having no luck in the cemetery and related checking, the Jay officer made a stop at Springer Sales & Service, Forrest Springer's business place there.

This was a key move because there the deputy found out about the theft, on or before Dec. 20, of the Balbec historical monument marker-the one often viewed by residents here and around the area in its position on a bluff at the edge of and overlooking Ind. 1, just two miles south of Wells County.

Underground railroad lore has been a big thing here over the years. That Balbec area site-an old cabin there-and a Bluffton residence property not far from downtown have been claimed by numerous people to have been stations on the underground railroad by which slaves were smuggled northward from the South to Canada during the tense years leading up to the Civil War. Some say Eliza Harris made her trek through here in 1846/7

Anyhow, as two and two were being put together between Jay County and Toldedo authorities, a Toledo detective issued a statement which simply broke up the people in Balbec when it was reported. The detective asked: "Where in the hell is Balbec, Ind.?"

Less than six years ago the Balbec Historical Club had 600 members. However, at present, Springer, the club president, said they had 70 members. The club members channeled their efforts back in 1979/80 and restored the old cabin refered to by the monument and plaque.

, Thursday night's meeting was special because Deputy Sheriff Swoveland, who went by plane with another officer to pick up the recovered plaque, was bringing it for formal return during the meeting. James Uptgraft, a member, carried the plaque into the meeting room for the Jay deputy. He noted it was no easy task as he guessed the weight to be about 150 lbs. All this caused puzzlement about how the thieves managed to get it down.

"Will the thief get the \$100.00 reward?" some one asked, alluding to the posters citing such a sum. Springer hastened to point out that the reward required conviction of the thief. And the sheriff hastened to note that the subject from whose car it was removed denies being the thief. He said it was given him by a friend. The Toledo accounts said Nedra Hoover had related that the old cabin once had been owned by her great-great-grandmother, Rachel McBride.

Historical material on display Thursday night included a program from a 1929 event that hailed the sixth anniversary of the 1923 marble plaque, which was noted as Jay County's first-ever historical marker.

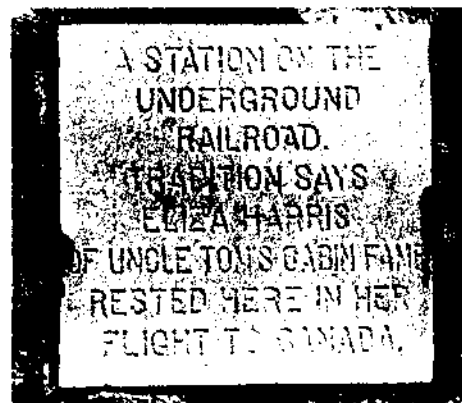
**Editors note:** More articles about the "underground railroad" at Balbec, IN were found in my old scrapbooks. Hope you enjoyed reading this one as much as you did the one in the July issue.



Wells County Sanitation Jim Uptgraft has all he can do to carry in the heavy marble marker.



Norma Alberson, secretary, and Forrest Springer, president of the Balbec Historical Club, sit by milling white Deputy Sheriff Dave Swaveland tells the intriguing story of the marker's recovery.



**PLAQUE BACK** — This 18-inch-square, 2-inch-thick marble plaque, a Civil War era historical events marker, dating back 62 years to 1923, was stolen in December from its monument location on Ind. 1 two miles south of Wells County but it has been recovered from a Toledo gunman who said he got it from a friend. (Other photos on page 10.)

(TAKEN FROM FURNITURE MAKERS OF INDIANA 1793 TO 1850 BY BETTY LAWSON WALTERS)

ABBREVIATIONS:

- c. CIRCA (ABOUT)  
C. CENSUS (POPULATION)  
CH COUNTY HISTORY; NUMBER FOLLOWING REFERS TO  
NUMBERED BIBLIOGRAPHY, PP. 230-33  
CO COUNTY  
q.v. WHICH SEE  
TWP TOWNSHIP  
w. WORKING

WELLS COUNTY:

- P. 48 #128 BEKHART, HENRY  
CABINETMAKER  
BORN c. 1814, PENNSYLVANIA; w. 1840, BLUFFTON, WELLS CO.  
LIVED WITH THOMAS BOWDEN, CABINETMAKER. (C)
- P. 53 #183 BOVINE, DAVID  
CABINETMAKER  
BORN c. 1819, SWITZERLAND; w. 1850, HARRISON TWP., WELLS CO.  
IN SAME HOUSEHOLD, CABINETMAKERS HENRY SCHAFER, PAUL I.  
SCHAFER, AND JACOB ENTZLE. (C)
- P. 53 #184 BOWDEN, THOMAS  
CABINETMAKER  
BORN c. 1816, ENGLAND; w. 1850, BLUFFTON, WELLS CO.  
IN SAME HOUSEHOLD, HENRY BEKHART, CABINETMAKER. (C)
- P. 88 #605 ENTZLE, JACOB  
CABINETMAKER  
BORN c. 1821, GERMANY; w. 1850, HARRISON TWP., WELLS CO.  
LIVED WITH DAVID BOVINE, CABINETMAKER. (C)
- P. 90 #623 FAY, EZRA  
CABINETMAKER  
BORN c. 1817, MAINE; w. 1850, BLUFFTON, WELLS CO. (C)
- P. 109 #851 HEDGES, I (OR J) B  
CABINETMAKER  
BORN c. 1820, GEORGETOWN, D.C.; w. 1850, BLUFFTON, WELLS CO. (C)
- P. 133 #1131 LINDSEY, FESTUS  
CABINETMAKER.  
BORN c. 1831, VIRGINIA; w. 1850, BLUFFTON, WELLS CO.  
LIVED WITH WILLIAM McBRIDE, CABINETMAKER, q.v. (C)
- P. 137 #1173 McBRIDE, WILLIAM  
CABINETMAKER AND UNDERTAKER.  
BORN c. 1805 PENNSYLVANIA; w. 1834-1841, SALEM, OHIO; w. 1841-1871,  
BLUFFTON, WELLS CO. TAUGHT NEPHEW GABRIEL SCHROCK CABINET-

MAKING AND BOTH CAME TO WELLS COUNTY TOGETHER IN 1841; SHROCK WAS STILL LIVING WITH HIM IN 1850. SON WILLIAM WARREN McBRIDE WAS ASSOCIATED WITH HIM AND CARRIED ON THE BUSINESS IN BLUFFTON. J. A. McBRIDE & SON FUNERAL DIRECTORS, CELEBRATED THEIR 100TH ANNIVERSARY IN 1940. ACCOUNT BOOKS (MICROFILM) IN LIBRARY OF INDIANA HISTORICAL SOCIETY INDICATE WILLIAM McBRIDE MADE BUREAUS, STANDS, DINING TABLES, DESKS, CHAIRS, BEDS, INCLUDING FRENCH BEDSTEADS, CHESTS, CUPBOARDS, SAFES, AND CRADLES, IN ADDITION TO THE USUAL MISCELLANY OF HOUSEHOLD OBJECTS. WOODS LISTED INCLUDE WALNUT, CHERRY, POPLAR, AND SYCAMORE. (C, CH 4)

P. 153 #1313 MILLIKEN, SAMUEL  
CABINETMAKER

BORN c. 1805, PENNSYLVANIA; w. 1850, JEFFERSON TWP, WELLS CO. (C)

P. 166 #1471 PARKER, JACOB  
CHAIRMAKER

BORN c. 1817, KENTUCKY; w. 1850, JACKSON TWP, WELLS CO. (C)

P. 187 #1690 SCHAFTER, HENRY  
CABINETMAKER

BORN c. 1828, SWITZERLAND; w. 1850, HARRISON TWP, WELLS CO.  
LIVED WITH DAVID BOVINE, CABINETMAKER. (C)

P. 187 #1691 SCHAFTER, PAUL I  
CABINETMAKER

BORN c. 1832, GERMANY; w. 1850, HARRISON TWP, WELLS CO.  
LIVED WITH DAVID BOVINE, CABINETMAKER. (C)

P. 191 #1745 SHROCK, GABRIEL  
CABINETMAKER

BORN 18 NOVEMBER 1831, SOMERSET CO., PENNSYLVANIA; w. AFTER 1841-1850-, BLUFFTON, WELLS CO. HE LEARNED CABINETMAKING FROM HIS UNCLE, WILLIAM McBRIDE, WITH WHOM HE WAS LIVING IN 1850. HE WORKED AS A JOURNEYMAN UNTIL ESTABLISHING HIS OWN BUSINESS IN 1856. AFTER 1873 HE TURNED TO CARPENTRY, AND IN 1881 MOVED TO A FARM. HE WAS STILL LIVING IN 1887. (C, CH 4)

P. 194 #1769 SMITH, ELIJAH  
CABINETMAKER

BORN c. 1825, NEW YORK; w. 1850, BLUFFTON, WELLS CO. (C)

P. 198 #1822 STARR, JEREMIAH  
CABINETMAKER

BORN c. 1832, MARYLAND; w. 1850, BLUFFTON, WELLS CO. (C)

P. 207 #1914 THOMPSON, IRA  
CABINETMAKER

BORN c. 1812, NEW YORK; w. 1850. BLUFFTON, WELLS CO. (C)

P. 209 #1936 TRENARY, RICHARD  
CABINETMAKER

w. 1848, JEFFERSON TWP, WELLS CO. SAID TO HAVE MADE FURNITURE



FOR THOMAS ARCHIBALD THERE, INCLUDING BASSWOOD BENCHES AND PRIMITIVE BEDSTEADS. (CH 4)

**BLACKFORD COUNTY:**

P. 190 #1723 SHELTON, SYLVESTER R & DAVID BRANSON  
CABINETMAKERS

w. 1842, HARTFORD CITY, BLACKFORD CO. SHELTON BORN VIRGINIA 1819; TO RUSH CO., 1827; BLACKFORD CO., 1842. THESE MEN BUILT HOUSES, MADE COFFINS AND FURNITURE. AN 1842 BUSINESS LISTING RECORDS THEM AS CARPENTERS AND JOINERS. (CH 5)

P. 204-205 #1884 SYMINGTON, JOHN  
CABINETMAKER

w. BEFORE 1842, HARTFORD CITY, BLACKFORD CO. HE WAS THE FIRST CABINETMAKER IN HARTFORD CITY, BUT MOVED FROM THERE BEFORE 1842. (CH 5)

\*\*\*\*\*

**BLACKFORD/WELLS GENEALOGY SOCIETY  
MINUTES  
SEPTEMBER 19, 1998, MEETING**

Minutes of the previous meeting were read and approved as corrected. The Treasurer's report was given with a balance of \$1,290.73.

**Unfinished Business:**

\*The nominating Committee had nothing new to report.

\*A report on Life Memberships will be given at the November meeting.

\*Reminder given regarding dues.

\*Report given by Connie Brubaker regarding the directory of Wells County Cemeteries. Samples of the new directory were presented and input from the Society was asked regarding additional information on Caretakers. Corrections will be made and copies can be ordered for \$3.00 each.

**New Business:**

\*Committee appointed to discuss meeting schedules for 1999. Committee members: Lucile Reidy, Jack Wilson, Blanch Bennett, & Sara Garton.

\*Norma Smith is doing some research on the Tewksbury family.

The next meeting will be held November 21, 1998 at the Bluffton Library.

The meeting closed with the Mizpah Benediction.

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- [Polly Manning m. John Curry - georganna Herrington](#) 7/08/98 (0)
- [MANNING, THELMA BORN ABOUT 1900 WVA - David Knighting](#) 7/05/98 (0)
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    - [Re: Mannings in Maryland - Judy Matlock](#) 7/16/98 (0)
  - [Re: Mannings in Maryland - Pat Evans](#) 7/12/98 (0)
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- [Re: Berthane U. \(Manning\) Jenkins - RICK MANNING](#) 7/01/98 (0)
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- [Re: Malinda \(Manning\) Phillips - RICK MANNING](#) 7/01/98 (0)
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  - [Re: Asher Blunt Manning - Carol Nlewinski 7/01/98 \(0\)](#)
  - [Re: Asher Blunt Manning - Scott Moshier 6/18/98 \(0\)](#)
- [Manning / wingrove 1820 IRL - Dave Griffiths 6/15/98 \(0\)](#)
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**COMPOSER OF "TAPS"**  
by Henry J. Pratt, for Antiqueweek

Union General Daniel Butterfield composed a now world-famous bugle call during the Civil War. You probably won't remember the General's name, but you'll surely recognize the somber tune he wrote - TAPS. Taps will fill the air thousands of times around the U.S. during Veterans' day. Oliver Norton, 131 years ago in July 1862, made history as the first bugler to play Taps.

One night when the Army's regulation call, "Extinguish Lights," was sounded, General Butterfield - depressed over his unit's heavy losses - felt that the bugle melody was woefully inadequate. He wanted a tune set apart, a bugle call to unite his troops and one they would always remember. Getting his composition on paper wasn't easy because Butterfield couldn't write or read music. There sat a two-star General, humming and whistling his soon-to-be famous bugle call for an aide. When the aide finished writing down the music, General Butterfield summoned his personal bugler, Oliver Norton. The "Old Man" handed the 22-year-old private an old coffee-stained envelope on which the music arrangement was scribbled.

Norton later recalled, "He asked me to sound it on my bugle. I did it several times, playing the music as written. Then, the General changed it somewhat, lengthening some notes and shortening others, but retaining the basic melody as he first gave it to me."

When satisfied with the revised notes, Butterfield ordered Norton to play the new bugle call that night. Troops were very surprised and enthralled when Private Norton began playing the call. The flag was lowered and the unique Taps filled the air.

as the new and exciting Taps spread to other Union encampments, commanders enthusiastically replaced "Extinguish Lights" with the new tune. Taps in 1862 became the regular nightly call for Union soldiers and it soon was played in Confederate units too. Many people don't realize Taps is not only music, but it also has words. The lyrics author isn't known, but Daniel Butterfield didn't write them. Here are the words, sung mostly today at Boy and Girl Scout camps from Taps' first verse: "Day is done/ Gone the Sun/ From the lake / From the hill/ From the sky/ All is well/ Safely rest/ God is nigh."

But it's largely the music - not the words- of this soul-rendering bugle call that makes men, women and children weep openly on Veterans' Day and throughout the year.

*There will be no Newsletter in December...*

*since we are so late in getting this issue out in October,  
due to the fact that our Editor, Lillie Harris, has had surgery on her hand,  
there will be no Newsletter in December. We look forward to lots of news  
from members and will have a great first issue in 1999.*



#### STORY AND PHOTOS BY DEB PERRY

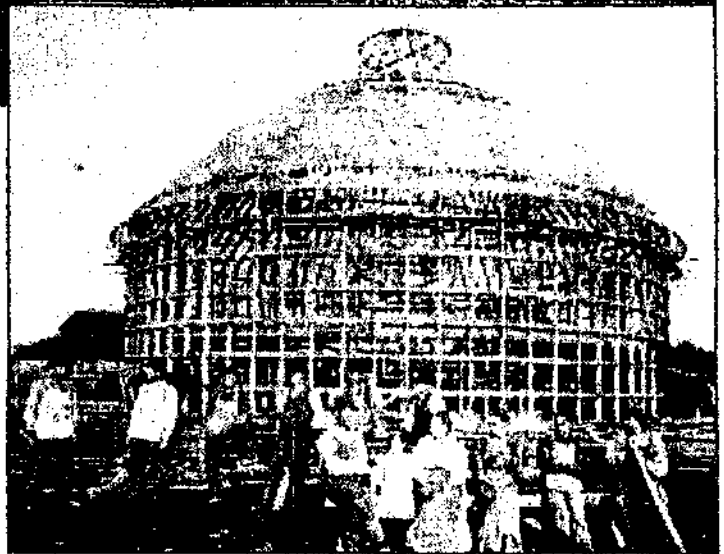
The "Dunwiddie Barn" located in Wells County's Harrison township was built in 1907 during Indiana's peak period of round barn construction.

Known locally as the "Dunwiddie Barn", the original owner was Loni Dyson. Built by the prolific circular barn contractor Benton Steele, the barn measures 64 feet across and 50 feet high. It has a three-pitch (ombre) roof and a north-south driveway through the center. The current owners are Fred and Brenda Sprunger.

Between 1870 to 1920, an estimated 250 to 300 round barns were constructed in Indiana, giving Hoosiers the boasting rites of more circular barns than any other state in the Union (Wisconsin followed with about 215, Minnesota with about 170).

During the 1985 - 88 Indiana Round Barn Survey, 226 circular barns were located. Most were built in the central flatlands where corn, dairy and livestock were the mainstay.

In 1992, only 111 were left standing. More than half of Indiana's historic circular barns collapsed due to neglect, demolished in favor of modern facilities, or destroyed in tornadoes.



**1907 DUNWIDDIE BARN** — Family members pose during construction of their circular barn. Seated, L-R: Loni Dyson, Grace Dyson, Lydia Dyson, Velma (Dyson) Crist, Carl Crist, and Clarence Dyson. Also pictured are builder Benton Steele (back row, second from right) and Isaac McNamee. Photographer unknown.

**BOX IN COURTHOUSE CORNERSTONE OPENED**  
Bluffton News Banner, Wednesday June 30, 1976  
Bluffton, Indiana

History will come alive Friday when a box placed in the cornerstone of the Courthouse August 29, 1889 is removed. The copper box which measures 14 1/4 by 10 1/4 by 7 1/8 inches will be put on display to the public following ceremonies at the Courthouse at 1:30 P. M. Friday. Miss Hilda Studebaker, a school teacher, will read excerpts from the 70 items placed in the box more than three-quarters of a century ago to the audience during a concert that night at 7 P. M.

On July 4th at 12:30 P. M. the articles and the box, along with a second box containing items from 1976, will be resealed into the cornerstone in another ceremony.

Opening of the cornerstone box has been a project of more than three months of planning and testing. In May, an Ohio firm was called in to X-ray the stone to locate the position of the box, although the stone was too thick for X-ray to be successful, however, a rough idea of the position was obtained. Caylor-Nickel Clinic paid for the test and James S. Jackson Construction Co. donated the stonework, locating the box by drilling holes.

Committee members were able to look into the box with the use of a medical instrument, and the contents appeared to be well preserved. Outside the box were found an 1825 Mexixn silver coin, the November 11, 1848 issue of the Republican Bugle, Bluffton's first news paper started in 1847, and the dried skin of a frog or toad.

While 73 persons are known to be as old or older than the present Wells County Courthouse, there were 80 who had lived in Wells Co. for 50 years or more when the Courthouse cornerstone was laid in 1889. That group was known as the "Old Settlers", and during the cornerstone ceremonies August 29, 1889 they were given octagonal walnut canes made from the interior trim of the second County Courthouse. Some of these are around yet today, having been passed from generation to generation. In side notes of the day, the Bluffton Chronicle reported that the day had been free of accidents, but "a gang of Women pickpockets relieved several ladies of their pocketbooks. A list of the old settlers includes:

John L. Metts, A. H. Metts, Nathan Toby, Herman Toby, Hiram Hatfield, Ellison Covert, George Fryback, William Milliken, Isaac Hatfield, John Neiriter, Ludwick Myers, Isaac Double, William Craig, Wesley Stine, Thomas Archibold, Catharine Mitchell, Joseph Gardenour. B. F. Wiley, David Myers, Michael Myers, Nelson Kellogg, Louisa M. Wentz, Mary Howdyshell, Nancy Myers, Eihulinda Day, Samuel Sours, George Shigley, Lyman Bears, John Shigley, Abner Nutter, Floyd Garnand, George L. Warner, Benjamin Stahl, J. J. Markley, Jacob A. Smith.

D. K. Hatfield, Aaron Fleming, O. F. Sutton, Mary A. Miller, Jacob Miller, Nancy Bulger, Jacob K. Harvey, Elizabeth Harvey, Mary DeWitt, Ann Goodyear, Mariah Masterson, Wesley Maddux, Nathan Lancaster, John Gilbert, William Gilbert, John Conrad, Peter Masterson, Daniel Masterson, John R. Davis, Milton Davis, Robert Chalfant, Abraham T. Studabaker, John Lancaster, William Stahl,

Jacob Stahl, Mrs. Jane Stahl, Wilson Bulger, James T. Mossburg, Henry Mossburg, John Studabaker, Janette Johnson, Rachel Parmlee, James Ball, John Ogden Sr., Samuel Myers, James D. Ridgley, James M. Merriman, Gabe H. King, Dr. L. Mason, Mrs. Elizabeth Wilson, Mrs. Bunn, David Craig, Amos Townsend and A. W. Johnston.

Wells Co. has been a wonderful place to spend a lifetime--or at least so say 73 or more persons born in this county on or before Aug. 29, 1889, the date the cornerstone was laid for the present Wells County Courthouse--and who lived in the county since that time. There are considerably more in this age bracket who, although not born here, have come to join the group of native born persons in their feelings and sentiments about Wells County life.

Following is the list of names to be placed in the Courthouse cornerstone when it is rededicated July 4. Two persons who became part of the official list and whose names will be included, although they have passed away since the compilation.

Persons born in Wells County, Indiana, on or before Aug. 29, 1889 (Date of laying of courthouse cornerstone) and who have lived all their life to date in Wells County are:

Edward H. Bay, Bluffton; Emma (Alberson) Barnes, Petroleum, passed away June 24, 1976; Lawrence L. Bender, Bluffton; Anna (Johnson) Bowman; Bluffton; Maude (Kline) Braun, Ossian; Belle Bulger, Bluffton; Earl Caley, Zanesville; James W. Carter, Petroleum; Ethel (Spaulding) Clayton, Bluffton; Minnie (Shadle) Collins, Poneto; Hermina (Wicking) Colson, Bluffton; Effie (Motz) Corll, Zanesville; Celeste (Caston) Craven, Bluffton; Oren O. Craven, Bluffton; Nettie (Coffield) Custer, Jackson twp.; Minnie (Buckner) Day, Bluffton;

Oliver Durr, Craigville; Artie (Crum) Eichorn, Uniondale; Martha (Prough) Earhart, Bluffton; Margaret (Tobias) Earl, Zanesville; Jennie (Osborn) Fahl, Markle; Lawrence E. Fair, Bluffton; Tina (Miller) Fosnaugh, Nottingham twp.; Mary (Taylor) French, Petroleum; Louise (Tillman) Gavin, Liberty Center; Ida (Neuenschwander) Gerber, Bluffton; Elizabeth (Miller) Griffin, Uniondale; Nell (Hale) Grove, Bluffton; Alta (Carnes) Harris, Keystone; Guy Harris, Keystone; Katie Jane (Judd) Heckley, Ossian; Harry Hedges, Bluffton; Minniw (Collins) Hendricks, Bluffton; Ada (Archbold) Henline, Ossian; Della (Frauhiger) Heyerly, Bluffton; Ada (Raber) Hoffacker, Bluffton; Casper Holloway, Nottingham twp.; Roe Hunter, Ossian; Opal (Hankins) Hurt, Bluffton; George Washington Johnson, Liberty Center;

Iva (Kunkle) Jones, Tocsin; Ethel (Sowards) Kreigh, Ossian; Effie (Haiflich) Lesh, Uniondale; Vella (Robinson) Lesh, Bluffton; Ross Lockwood, Bluffton; Corrine (King) Markley, Bluffton; Albert Melching, Ossian; Carrie (Cline) Melching, Ossian. Passed away June 27, 1976 age 88; Grace (Koons) Melching, Ossian; Lydia (Egley) Merkey, Bluffton; Dora (Grandlienard) Miller, Domestic; Lulu Ann (Barcus) Miller, Bluffton; Edith (Johnson) Mossburg, Liberty Center; Mamie (Hart) Nelson, Poneto; Ida (Baumgardner) Oldfather, Rockcreek twp. (age 100 yrs.); Mildred (Perry) Park, Bluffton;

Harry O. Rabber, Bluffton; Anna (Bauermeister) Roembke, Ossian; Della (Gerwig) Rudy, Bluffton; Dean (Lutz) Schwartz, Lancaster twp.; Catherine (Mossburg) Sheets, Bluffton; Harry Shoemaker, Bluffton; Laura (Comer) Smith, Ossian; Ray Smith,

Ossian; Dr. C. E. Sowards, Bluffton; Letha (Barton) Sowards, Tocsin; Jennie (Sawyer) Thompson, Bluffton; Carie (Hower) Higgins Van Dyne, Bluffton; Belvia (Bowman) Way, Ossian; Dora (Hoopingardner) White, Ossian; Dwight K. Williamson, Bluffton; Chancy Wilson, Bluffton; Pearl (Ruby) Wilson, Bluffton; Ethel (Hedges) Rudy, Harrison twp.;

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**JOSE: IS THAT JOSEPH, JOSIAH, OR JOSEPHUS?**

Paging through Marriage Book A in the County Clerk's Office, we noticed a rather strange name, Jose K. Hobson. The surname is not unusual, but the first, Jose, was. Was that short for Joseph, Josiah, Josephus? He was a Justice of the Peace and performed several marriages. We wanted to know more about him.

We decided the first place to look was in the census records. These are on microfilm in most public libraries, and can also be seen in the Blackford County Museum library. The earliest census available for Blackford County is 1840. We soon find Jose listed as the head of household. Later records show that his wife was Catharine Goghnauer, and their children were Benjamin F., Sarah Catherine, James Perry, Margaret Ann, Jacob Elijah, George Lafayette and Walter March.

Jose K. Hobson is not listed in the biographical index of the 1887 Blackford-Jay Counties History however the third chapter lists early settlers, and sure enough, there on page 722, read "Jose K. Hobson, a pioneer of Harrison Township, sold liquor contrary to law, but was led to reform. He removed to Allen County where he died." Well, now that's interesting!

Page 725 in the chapter on County Government, tells us, "Ordered, by the board, (County Commissioners) that Jose K. Hobson be licensed to vend merchandise in Blackford County, Indiana for the term of one year from this date, Licensed by Mr. Jacob Brugh, Clerk of Blackford County." The date was probably early in 1839.

The next page reveals that our man was one of the grand jurors at the very first session of the Circuit Court. In the list of sheriffs, we note that Jose K. Hobson filled this office from 1850 to 1853.

We do not know if Jose K. Hobson was five feet six inches or six feet five inches tall, smooth-faced or bearded, blue-eyed or brown, but we can make some very good assumptions as to the kind of man he was from the foregoing information.

Mr. Hobson was far-seeing and adventurous or he would not have left his parental home to come to an unsettled, swampy, forested area as Blackford County was in the 1830's. He was a man of integrity and esteemed by his fellow countians as witness his appointments to offices of authority. And he was a man open to change - he sold liquor, but "was led to reform!"

We don't have a picture of Jose K. Hobson, but we have a good "picture" of him. We still don't know if Jose was short for Joshua? We think his name was just Jose.