



- Minutes of the meeting May 17 at 10:00 am
- Meeting July 19, 2003 at 10:00 am ~ Commissioners' office in Bluffton.
- Memorial Day reflections ~ Decoration Day
- Queries and other correspondence
- Second part of the Series – Walker Murder Trial of 1884

May Meeting

Our May meeting was held May 17th at the Montpelier Community Building

Our speaker at this meeting was Dawn Montgomery, discussing restoration work that has been done at Twibell Cemetery, north of Montpelier.

Newsletters

Newsletters will go out via e-mail for all of those who have provided an e-mail address. These newsletters are in .PDF format. Photos are clearer in the e-mail version. The only copies made will be for those who do not have an e-mail address. If you are receiving the newsletter via e-mail and wish to still received the paper copy, contact montgomery@parlorcity.com

Sunday, May 18, 2003

Shiloh Cemetery will be holding its annual Memorial Day celebration on Sunday, May 25 2003. The program is at 1:00, and we will be having a potluck dessert smorgasbord afterward. The first camp meeting was held in 1817. The present church was built in 1847. We were incorporated in 1927 and placed on the National Register of Historical Places in 1982 . . . and we're still goin'!

The last couple of years have seen the reinterment of Rev. War veteran, Luther Adams, of Wilhoit Cemetery Hall of Shame infamy, refurbishment of the meeting house, improvement of security, establishment of a pet cemetery, updating and correcting our grave lists, installing a memorial garden and general beautification of the landscape. Please join us if you can; we'd love to have you.

MaryAlice Parks maryalicepa@earthlink.net

Decoration Day

This is the Memorial Day entry from the Besse Groves Journal:

May 30, 1901- Decoration Day. Uncle Dave and Jess mowed the yard. They both went to town in the AM. Mother baked bread and pies. After dinner John came over and we went to town. He marched with the Maccabees and I drove around town. I got with Bertha Wentz and we came out to the cemetery. After the exercises I went back to town and got John. Then we took a drive and a race also, then we came home. After supper Father, Jess and Uncle Dave went to town. Mother and I ironed after supper. Mrs. Chaney gave Mother a slip of a white chrysanthemum.



Cemetery Education 101

Elementary students to visit the Batson

Friday, May 17th, Rhonda Stoffer met with the 4th grade students and teachers at Southern Wells. They will be going to the Batson Cemetery in Wells County on Monday, May 19th about 8:30 until 11:00. Another group will be there from 12:30 until 2:30 in the afternoon. The 3rd group is scheduled for Tuesday, May 20th around 8:30 also, unless plans change because of rain. Rhonda Stoffer and Mark Davis will be working with the kids. The kids will do rubbings, show some restoration techniques, and learn about respect for a cemetery versus cemetery vandalism.

BWGS Minutes

Saturday, May 17th 2003

8 people Attending: 1.Norma Smith; 2.Kathy Davis; 3.Martha Hall; 4.Cami Mount; 5.Estaleene Suman; 6.Linda Thomas; 7.Connie Brubaker; 8. Dawn Montgomery

Opening: Reading of "If I Had My Life to Live Over" by Erma Bombeck, offered by Connie Brubaker. Correspondence: No queries at this time. Florida Genealogy Society Conference flier received, also Midwest Roots Conference flier.

Treasurer's Report: Beginning balance: \$2082.82; Receipts: \$45 dues; \$310 Pioneer Certificates; \$80 Will Index Books; total receipts: \$435; Disbursements: \$51.49 postage; \$38.33 membership cards; total disbursements: \$95.82; Ending balance: \$2427.95

Old Business: Our Will Index: Jeri Brown sent out notices to Genealogy Societies and Clubs, which resulted in some sells. Also, Linda is planning to put them on E-Bay. One box of books left to sell at this time, cost \$15 plus \$5 shipping. Our Pioneer and Early Settler's Book of Wells and Blackford Counties, is now almost complete. Connie and Linda have been working on the indexing.

New Business: Tom is at a workshop at the Berne library today, he felt that someone from BWGS should be there, he will bring back information. Our May Newsletter is not quite finished. We looked thru the new 2003 Handbook and made corrections. We looked thru the By-Laws to see about having someone cover the minutes as Secretary. Blanche has not been able to attend the meetings this past year. Mickey Jones, we believe, took the minutes for the March meeting. Kathy Davis will be temporary Secretary until elections. Cami Mount will cover in the event Kathy is unable to attend. The minutes need to be turned over to Dawn or Connie before the newsletters are finished. The next meeting is July 19th. We will be taking a tour of the Wells County Courthouse.

There has been a Pioneer Cemetery found on the banks of the Wabash, West of Uniondale. 20 graves with river rock stones have been discovered. Go to website <http://www.renno.org/elzey> for more information. You will find maps and research information on the cemetery by the property owner, Mark Elzey.

We were shown a book about Civil War history, "From Fields of Fire and Glory" written by Rod Gragg, printing in 2002. It has handwritten letters from Civil War Soldiers and others. Connie stopped by the Wells county Courthouse to see if they were using our Will Index, they were not aware of the book. When they were shown, they said it will be used as it will save them a lot of time also. Dawn showed a presentation about the Twibell Cemetery, she is making a book, and has done a lot of research. John Walters, the Graveyard Groomer, is coming May 31st and June 1st to the Twibell Cemetery to perform more of his restoration magic. On June 7th and 8th he may be visiting the McFerrin Cemetery.

~ Kathy Davis, acting secretary

Note: These minutes will be repeated in the July newsletter. Hopefully it will get out the week *prior* to the meeting ☺. The July meeting will be held at the Commissioners' office at the court house in Bluffton. A tour of the Wells County court house is scheduled for that meeting. ~ montgomery@parlorcity.com



The Meaning of Memorial Day

by Frederick G Langston

The custom of placing flowers on the graves of the war dead began in 1866 and in 1868 General John A Logan declared May 30 would be a day to decorate with flowers the graves of comrades who died in defense of their country.

After World War I the day was extended to pay homage and honor the Dead of all wars. The most solemn ceremony conducted on Memorial Day is the placing of a wreath at the "Tomb of the Unknowns" located in Arlington National Cemetery.

Memorial Day had a more popular name called Decoration Day as it is the day when we offer flowers to our soldier dead and lay flowers on the hallowed ground where these heroes sleep after having given their lives in the causes of our country.

The parades, floats, marching bands and the lines of veterans from World War I, World War II, Korea, Vietnam and Desert Storm all pay tribute to those gallant men and women who willingly answered their country's call And who paid the ultimate price.

We of today's America owe them so much and seem to appreciate them so little. Many of us have only the foggiest notion of the real meaning of Memorial Day. Because of their valor and deeds we do not have to tremble at the sound of Nazi jackboots pounding down our streets, nor have to humble ourselves at the feet of a communist commissar, or pay tribute to a demi-god wielding a samurai sword. Nor do we need to fear any one of the long line of dictators and war lords who have paraded themselves across the pages of recent history.

It would behoove us to humble ourselves for just one moment each year and return to the old American tradition of slowing our pace at 11 A.M. on Memorial Day, pay reverence and thank those honored dead for what they did. Far too often our nation takes for granted the freedoms all Americans enjoy.

Let us remember these freedoms were bought and paid for by the lives of others few of us actually knew. They came from all walks of life and regions of the country. But they all had one thing in common - love and loyalty to country.

By honoring the nation's war dead, we preserve their memory and thus their service and sacrifices in the memories of future generations.

Frederick G Langston / State of Washington Legislative Officer / The Veterans of Foreign Wars
POB 3111, Wenatchee WA 98807-3111 / 509-662-7288 FAX 509-667-2016

Old-Fashioned Memorial Day

One hundred years ago, folks celebrated Memorial Day from the heart. They took the holiday quite seriously, observing the day with great honor. A cemetery was the site of speeches, marching bands and waving flags. A ceremony of decorating the graves with live flowers was an important part of the celebration.

The band came out and played. American Legion personnel were on hand. A 21-gun salute was something you looked forward to. Homes were full of company. People would come from near and far to decorate. The men that shot off the guns led the parade, then the band came and every grave had a flag on it. Some of them were American flags. Different lodges decorated for their fallen members. They gathered with the soldiers, the campfire girls and the boy scouts. The girls had baskets of flowers they'd go around and put flowers and flags on the different graves. A minister gave the blessing or prayer. The band played. Everyone went to the cemetery and took their flowers out.

In the Besse Groves Journal for the year 1901, the word cemetery appears 72 times. The phrase 'dug a grave' appears 63 times. Her family went to the cemetery, walked around the cemetery, worked in the cemetery, watered flowers in the cemetery. They went to the cemetery after church, in the evening and in the snow.

When my Grandma was alive, Decoration Day was quite the event for her. She remembered what she had been taught, and lived it throughout her life. The car was loaded and Grandma made her rounds to various family members at various cemeteries ~ usually with a helper. I wish I hadn't been a foolish kid who wasn't interested. Now that I am older, Grandma isn't physically here to show me the way. I will do the best I can, keep her memory alive and remember those who should not be forgotten ~ for at least "one moment each year".

Old Fashion Memorial Day was taken from *Twibell Cemetery, An Old Pioneer Cemetery and the Lives of its Pioneers*.



Queries and Other Correspondence

My great great grandfather, Henry G. Miller, came to the Muncie area sometime after 1838, and from there he went to Montpelier where I believe he built a mill around 1849. From there he came to Wells County and built a mill. My gg grandmother, Henry's wife, was Francian Morris. I don't have any information on Francian's parents at this point.

My ggg grandparents are Ithamer Harrold and Ruth Clampitt, and they came to Wells County in 1852. My gg grandfather, George E. Harrold married Mary M. Minnich whose parents Jacob Minninch and Christina Ebersole came in 1841 "to locate on a tract of 160 acres in Jackson Township, Wells County, which Mr. Minnich had entered in 1836." (according to Jacob's biography)

My ggg grandparents, William West and Sarah Arthur supposedly came to Wells County in 1840 to live on a some land they had bought previously. Their child, Hiram West, married Mary Walker in Wells County (one of the few pieces of documentation that I actually have) in 1853. Hiram and Mary are my gg grandparents.

Last but not least, my ggg grandparents Thomas Woodward Bennett and Elizabeth Arment came to Wayne County in 1840 from Chester County, Pennsylvania, and from there to Huntington where my great grandfather John Arment Bennett, was born in 1856. After John's father died in the Civil War and his mother died 10 years later, I'm not sure how long it took him to get to Wells County, where the family finally settled.

If you can provide information on these ancestors, contact: Mary Reetz at rama@tc3net.com



Newsletter Query Form

Please print in capital letters, the last name of the person you wish to query. Please include maiden name for women. Keep queries to a maximum of 25 characters. Thank you.

<u>Last Name</u>	<u>First Name</u>	<u>Birth Date</u>	<u>Death Date</u>	<u>Marriage Date</u>	<u>Children</u>
_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____

Your Name: _____

Address: _____ E-mail: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____



Unidentified photo submitted by Jeri Brown. If you have any information on the identity, contact her at kgbj170@aol.com

Wells County Will Index

The price for the book is \$15.00, plus \$5.00 shipping for Society members. The price for non-members is \$20.00, plus \$5.00 shipping.

To order your book, send your money to: Blackford-Wells Genealogy Society / PO Box 54 / Bluffton, Indiana 46714. You may pick one up at our Society meetings or at *Pages from the Attic* / 7077N – 100W / Uniondale. Books will be shipped as soon as the money is received.

William Walker

The Great Murder Trial

Blackford and Wells Counties, Indiana

1883-1884

These events took place 119 years ago this month



Transcribed and contributed by:



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(Photo of Wm. Walkers g-g-g-grandsons)

Bluffton Weekly Chronicle
May 15, 1884

William Walker

The Great Murder Trial now in Progress



The whole of last week was taken up with evidence in the Walker trial. The State finished up with their side of the hearing of the witnesses Wednesday noon. Sheriff Justus and his deputy James Dailey testified to the *blank* of *blank* of Walkers good behavior during the time he has been jail. Walker informed on some parties who were trying to make their escape, one of them a forger from Adams county, had been furnished a saw by his wife and had used it on two of the bars. When Dailey came in to give the prisoners their breakfast, Walker told him to be on the lookout as something was wrong. Daily went to the lower part of

the jail where he heard the sawing. The defense offered testimonies from a large number of witnesses showing that Walkers character___ honest and humanity were excellent and that he was one of the best businessmen that township ever had.

These witnesses were of the very best citizens of that neighborhood. Friday, Walker's father and his wife testified in Walkers behalf. The main testimony was to the effect that Walker had been drinking now and for six months prior to the homicide and was not, at times, in his right mind.



Dr. L.E. Maddox

The main points given in the testimony of witnesses are as follows: Dr. L.E. Maddox stated that George Shaw died from the effect of a shot fired by William Walker. Saw Harvey Wilson and Shaw fighting with Shaw on top. Shaw let Wilson up and Wilson began to abuse him by calling him hard names. Shaw said he could stand it no longer, threw his coat, picked up a stone, struck Wilson and knocked him down. Liz Darr was present and took part in the fight catching hold of Shaw's hair and clothes and calling him hard names. She turned to Walker and said, "Will you allow my poor brother to be hurt". Walker replied "keep cool, I will fix him." Shaw was on top of Wilson holding him with his left hand and striking him with his right. Walker stepped south of the combatants and rested his revolver on his left hand to take aim and fired. The ____ entered the right temple. Walker stood for a few minutes holding his revolver and then walked away. Shaw expired an hour and a half after being shot. The weapon was a Smith & Wesson 32 caliber. Walker was intoxicated when he did the shooting.

Constable Bell testified was not present when the shooting occurred, but arrived five minutes after. Shaw was lying on the ground. Attempted to arrest Walker who said, "If you attempt to arrest me I will put a hole through you." Saw him after in his door yard after he returned from the woods. Walker said he would not be arrested until he got protection. Said he would not leave and would give \$100 security.

Jacob Young testified that he heard Walker say two weeks before this shooting that Shaw has put more on *me than I can myself*. He said at another time "If Shaw makes any trouble, I'll settle him. Saw Shaw and Walker together _____ and saw the

former buy goods of the latter. They seemed friendly.

Susan Winfield heard Walker, Wilson and Liz Darr talking twenty minutes before the shooting. Wilson said he would fight Shaw for \$25. Liz Darr said, "don't for my sake." He said there would be ten dollars for each of them.

Philip *Hitesman* saw the fight and gave the same testimony as related above.

Frank isk saw the shooting and his testimony is _____ to that of Dr. Maddox.

*Winfred Vend*_____ testified that defendant had been drinking whiskey. Saw him drink four _____ glasses on the day the shooting occurred. Knew Walker to be a steady drinker. Heard Walker say *that while drinking*.

Frank P. Risley testified that he had a conversation with Walker in reference to a slander suit. The plaintiffs being Mary A. Wilson and Isaac Wilson vs. Frank P. *Risley* then pending in the Wells Circuit Court. George Shaw was one of the witnesses in the case and had expected to prove by him Walker had illicit intercourse with Isaac Wilson's wife. Walker asked _____ why he used his name in that slander suit. "You might as well tell me" he said. "I know who the witness is and I would like to see him now and settle with him" Said he was ready to die if that witness could put it on him.

Wingate Farlow said he saw the fight but did not hear Liz Durr say anything to Walker or her brother.

Smith *McVaugh* said he saw the fight, was standing within six feet of the parties, heard no remarks between Walker and Liz Durr. Thought Walker was drunk.

L. Hutchins said he saw the fight. Heard Liz Durr remark to Walker but did not hear him reply to her. Saw Shaw pick up a rock and knock Wilson down.

Mrs. Frank P. Risley testified to hearing Wilson call the Defendant and saw him come with revolver in his hand. Mr. B_____ told him to put in his pocket. Walker replied that he would tend to that himself. Liz Darr _____ Shaw _____ kind of v_____ pulled his hair and scratched his face and asked Walker if he was going to see her brother abused. He _____ way. After Shaw was shot Wilson jumped to his feet and said, "Now if there is any more of them bring them along and we will serve them the same way." Saw Shaw strike Wilson with a stone.

James B. Shadle testified that Walker's character was good up to six or eight months before the homicide. He heard of his intimacy with Isaac Wilson's wife six months previous to the shooting.

Edward C_____ testified to Walkers character being good up to one year prior to the homicide. Knew Shaw. Heard him saying _____ that he had borrowed money of defendant and needed 88 _____ was ashamed to ask him to loan him money again.

Karlin H. Konz testified that defendants' character was good up to _____ months prior to the shooting. Walker was a grain _____, had a _____ store, was Postmaster and trustee of Chester township at the time he shot Shaw. Defendant began to drink about four months after his election as trustee. Heard that he had trouble with Dr. Maddox and Mr. Winfield some time before the homicide.

Robert Johnson and Philip Hessman testified to hearing a man remark at **the time defendant was brought down to attend his childs funeral**, "That is not what we elected Sheriff Justice for and if they had done what is right they would have hung Walker."

Jonathan Lowry, James T. Arnold, Ellen Abshire, Maggie Abshire, Henry Bar_____ testified to the defendants habit of drinking during the six months prior to the homicide and his good character prior to that event.

George Howard did not think he conducted his business properly toward the last.

John Bell, William A. Sleppy, Wm. Sheeham, John Holloway and D. M. Spaulding testified to being acquainted with Walker and that his character for peace, quiet, and humanity was good.

Alexander Walker father of the defendant and his wife also testified but nothing new was elicited from them concerning the affair.

The defendant was on the stand nearly all day Monday. He was closely examined concerning his life from boyhood up to the time of the homicide. The physicians were then called and testified relating to the defendants insanity. The day was also taken up examining the physicians of our place.

The state and the defense each had a hypothetical question to put to each physician and in most cases received answers to suit them concerning sanity or insanity as they desired. Dr. H. Gregg answered the states question by saying that considering the facts stated the man was of sound mind and when the defense _____ their question, he replied the man was of unsound mind.

Bluffton Weekly Chronicle
May 22, 1884

William Walker The Great Murder Trial now in Progress



George Miller, James O. Baker, John Alspach, William Templeton, John Grover, Benj. Mommitt, Davis Hutchins, William Jarrett, Peter Studebaker, John Gilbert, N. Lancaster, Cephus Bell, and Hiram Tewksbury all testified to having had business transactions with William Walker within a year previous to the homicide and from that intercourse with him they judged him to be of sound mind.

A number of witnesses testified the best of their ability as experts on the question of insanity. The counsel for the defense who is said to be the best posted lawyer in the state on the question of insanity in all its ramifications gave the M.D.'s some intricate questions relating to insanity which they answered with a more or less degree of intelligence on their part.

Mrs. Walker, wife of the defendant testified to the fact that Walker was at times deranged by strong drink and thought men were pursuing him to kill him. She saw her husband and Shaw in frequent conversations always of a friendly nature. Mr. Shaw the deceased, in company with his wife had visited at their house. Said her husband began drinking on the day of the homicide before breakfast. Saw Constable Bell approach her husband after the shooting. He was told to keep hands off but Walker did not add he would put a hole through him if he did not do as he requested. Said her husband on his return from the woods, after the shooting, asked for his small revolver, which she gave to him. Other witness were then called who testified to Walkers excellent character up to six months before



Mrs. Wm. Walker

the shooting and in their opinion he was of sound mind when he committed the deed.



Wm. Walker

William Walker testified on his own behalf. He was born and raised in Chester township. Followed farming _____ his boyhood until he reached the age of 19 years when he entered the army as a private soldier. Was out about four years. Returned home and began farming for himself, which occupation he followed up to some time in 1880, when he began buying stock and finally purchased a store in Keystone, which he still owned up to the time of the homicide. Was also purchasing grain and was postmaster. Left his business towards the last to his employees and only gave it slight attention. Said he had no recollection of the fight only of seeing Shaw lying on the ground and his face covered with blood and when he recovered his right mind found himself lying in the woods. He got up and returned home. On his way met friends. All was still confusion and he did not remember of seeing the constable, but remembers of meeting Mr. Lowery.

Dr. Henry Gregg was called to the witness stand to testify to the hypothetical question as asked by the defense. He replied that he would judge the person to be of unsound mind.

Drs. Gorsell and Melcheimer both declared the defendant of unsound mind as judged from the hypothetical question of the defense.

Henry S____, __. C. Eddington, Jak Bell, and Luther Twibell all testified to having

done business with Walker a short time prior to the homicide and in their opinion, he was a man of sound mind.

Samuel H. Patterson testified to having met Walker a number of times and conversed with him concerning the purchase of his stock or goods. Purchased the stock after the homicide paying cash for it at its invoice. Thought prisoner of sound mind.

Henry Batchman sold his store to Walker. The defendant paid him promptly as the notes fell due. Kept his books for him and tended to the _____, and everything was correct to the cent, and were always good friends, but could not muster up courage to admonish defendant not to drink "too hard". Thinks he was of sound mind outside of times when he was intoxicated.

George Miller testified that he is assessor of Chester township and assessed Walker in June in jail. Had business with him prior to the homicide and always considered him a man of sound mind.

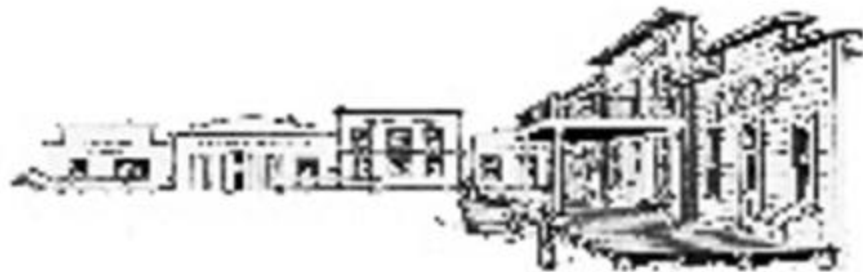
James O. Baker, John Grover, Wm. Templeton, John Ashbaugh and John Gilbert all testified to having done business with

defendant and in their opinion, he was a man of sound mind. The latter witness said he had an ill feeling against Walker for killing Shaw.

Dr. Horton insisted that Walker was of sound mind.

Dr. Doster, judging from hypothetical question thought the defendant was of unsound mind.

On Monday only a few witnesses were examined. The statutes of _____ provided that in a case trial was going on at the expiration of a term of court the case could be continued over until the next term. The defense asked for a continuance of Walkers case until next term. The request was not granted and the making of evidence was closed. L.L. Martin opened the _____ on the part of the state in a _____ address to the jury _____ evening _____ next day. Each side was given eight hours in which to address the jury. Mr. Joseph S. Dailey followed L.L. Martin and acqui__ed himself _____ great _____. The Court House is crowded with ladies and gentlemen eager to hear the lawyer's plea to the jury.



To be continued. Watch for your July newsletter for Part 3, The Verdict, in this series.



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