



Special points of interest:

- Early Settlers book
- Wells County Library
- Future newsletters.
- Flood of 2003

Blackford Wells Tracer

SEPTEMBER 5, 2003

Early Pioneers of Blackford and Wells County Book

The “Early Settlers of Blackford and Wells County” book is at the printers as I am typing this and is expected to arrive by the Sept. 20th meeting. If you have not placed an order for your copy now is the time. There are 150 copies for sale. Re-printing is possible, but only when all of the original copies have been sold. The cost of the book is

\$40.00 plus shipping for members \$45.00 for non-members

plus shipping. Shipping will be determined after the books arrive and will be controlled by your zip code for postage.

Remember if you haven't purchased a copy of the Wells County Will Index, Please do so soon, the copies remaining are limited.

September 20

Next meeting will be Saturday September 20 at the Com-

munity Building in Montpelier. The Speaker will be Connie Brubaker. The subject matter “Publishing your Family History”. She will be giving advice on how to publish your very own book, how to arrange the contents, what to include and how to write the stories to make an interesting history of your family. Plan to attend and bring a friend.

Workshops at Wells County Library

Blackford Wells Genealogy Society will be presenting two workshops at the Wells county Library. The first will be Sept. 25 from 6:30-7:45 “The Basics” The second will be October 9th same time “After the basics” Registration is limited to 20 for each night.. Seven reservations have been received as of this date.

For more information you may contact the library, check the library web page, or call Connie at 260-543-2423.

If you can help with either of these workshops please contact Connie ASAP we will need 3-4 members at each workshop. You will be given an outline of the agenda before the evening of the workshop so you can be prepared for questions you may be ask. If we do our job well this just could increase the interest in our Society as well as the membership. So let's all pitch in and do what we can to make this a success.

History of Blackford County 1986

HOUSES WITH HISTORICAL CHARM



(UPPER LEFT) Thomas Aspy house: This is the present home of Bill and Teresa (Osborn) Aspy, located at West Green and South Jefferson Streets in Montpelier. The home was once owned by Mr. and Mrs. Thomas L. Anderson, maternal grandparents of Bill. At one time, this 12-room home housed the residence and dentist office of Dr. Marsland and was thought to have been built by some of the Ira Spaulding family in the middle to late 1800s.

(UPPER CENTER) Fredrick Miller house: Built in 1890 by Fredrick G. Miller in Victorian Italianate style. This is one of the first elaborate houses built in Montpelier just prior to the oil boom. Mr. Miller was one of two brothers who came to this country from Germany in 1841 to join an older brother in the milling business. This mill was near Montpelier but in Wells County. This house retained most of its original features including very fine woodwork. The house was in the Miller family until the early 1950s. It is presently being restored by Mr. and Mrs. William Gaier.

(UPPER RIGHT) Calvin Shull House: This imposing structure which dominates the corner on West High Street was originally the home of Dr. C.Q. Shull. The house was built in 1884. Among its more spectacular features was the curving staircase. Dr. Shull's office was on the first floor, located just off a vestibule from which the stairway ascended. A butler's pantry adjoined the kitchen. The house had five rooms downstairs and four upstairs. Above the second floor was an expansive attic. The house is now occupied by Routledge Publications. Earlier it was the Old Brick House Restaurant.

(LOWER LEFT) Elsworth-Kelsay house: Built circa 1840 by

William Elsworth on his farm northeast of Montpelier. It is Federal style. This property remained in the Elsworth family until 1908, when it was purchased from the Elsworth heirs by Guy H. Kelsay. It is still in the Kelsay family. The house retains many of its original architectural features, including an unusually placed eyebrow window. It was extensively restored in 1925.

(LOWER CENTER) Miller-Bonham House: Built in about 1846 on the farm of David Twibell. It is Federal style. Frederick G. Miller purchased the farm in 1866 and lived there until 1890, when his new house was completed just east of this house on Warren Avenue. It was left to his daughter, Hannah Miller Bonham, wife of William Bonham. This house is presently owned by her great-granddaughter, Mary Margaret Kelsay. It has been in the family for 120 years. Most of the architectural features are intact, including fine examples of artistically woodgrained interior trim and original Norfolk dove latches. This house was restored in 1982.

(LOWER RIGHT) Community House: This historic structure, on the southeast corner of Main and Huntington Streets, was built during Oil Boom days at the turn of the century. It was used as an office for the Ohio Oil Company, and it is said that millions of dollars changed hands here each week. Later, it became the Walker Mortuary, then the Jackson Nursing Home and briefly was a private residence. In 1980 the house was bought by Kenneth Neff to be used by community organizations. It is headquarters for the Historical Society and houses the City Museum. A meeting room, accommodating 40 people, is used regularly by other community groups. The original oil company office has been retained. (45)



A HOME OF EARLIER DAYS

Typical of the log houses of the mid-19th century was this cabin, once located on the southwest corner of the intersection of Roads 500N and 700E. In 1869 the property was purchased by a basket-maker, George Fensel, and his wife, Catherine. The property was passed on to the Fensels' daughter, Lottie, and husband, Myrl Norton. It remained in the family for over 100 years. The cabin has long since disappeared, but the property was purchased in 1977 by Randy and Lana Wilkerson. A descendant of the Fensels, Rita (Kellogg) Morgan and her husband, William, live near the site. This picture was taken in 1906. The girl in the foreground is believed to be either Eva or Rosa Norton. The little boys with her are twins, Earl and Burl.

Floods of 2003

Was it really the 100 year flood? How soon will it happen again? Was the “Flash flood” really following an old creek that flowed through Bluffton at one time? Have you ever heard of Picket’s Run? If you were hiding under a rock the last two months you probably have no idea what I’m taking about...

Well, way back in the 1870’s maybe early 1880’s there flowed a smelly creek right through the heart of our lovely city of Bluffton. Of course I wasn’t there to witness all of this, but I have been told that many people complained loud and long about the creek called Picket’s Run because it was not of the best condition and the odor was rather unpleasant. So to calm the city dwellers the decision was made to use that creek bed for a city drain sewer bed and thus cover that smelly thing up once and for all.

Time passed life was good the old creek was gone and the city had a great drain sewer system. But this past July that old creek reared it smelly head and a flash flood was the result. Many streets and homes were flooded in a matter of only a few minutes. The surface water rushed its

way to the river’s edge and to get there it followed the path it had taken so many years ago. The smell it left behind was unbelievable.

Soon the rising waters of the Wabash covered the smell and mess the flash flood brought about, by July 9th the Wabash was reaching out into homes and businesses of Bluffton in the same manner it did in 1913. The river rose to an astonishing level of 18.3 feet above flood stage. The river followed it’s old path up Picket’s Run to the southwest and south east filling the ditches to the north as well. The water did not end there it spread out into the county covering many acres of corn and beans. Hundreds of acres were lost , homes in Vera Cruz and Liberty Center were affected. Homes near Uniondale were cut off by the rising waters. The dam in Huntington was closed because of the danger of the rising water. Homes below the dam were equally effected by the flooding when the level of the reservoir had to be lowered.

Could all of this have been prevented? No, the rains came and came and came. No one on earth can stop them. Will we be better prepared the next flood ? I doubt it, but those who experienced the floods of 2003 will be talking about it for the rest of their lives. Picket’s Run will go on flowing just as it has in the past. But it isn’t a secret anymore.

1913—322 East Washington Street —July 10th 2003



News from the Wells County Library

Have you checked out the Wells County Library Web site? The Obituaries are listed and very user friendly. Just type in the first 3-4 letters of the surname and it will bring up all names that start with those letters. Perhaps you only know a year type it in and you will get the obits for that year. You can search this site from many different angles. That web site is <http://www.wellscountylib.org>

Help wanted... The staff (Connie and whom ever she can get to help) of the Tracer is in need of articles to use in the news letter. Articles from Blackford County are needed most, I can get lots of info on Wells County, but I would like to balance the letter with both counties articles. Until I get some articles from Blackford County members I will be printing 99% of the news letter on Wells County. I can't print what I don't know or have.

High paying job offer!!!!!! We need someone to be the editor for the news letter. You do not have to live in Wells or Blackford Counties or even in Indiana to do the letter. You do need to be dependable and willing to type, edit, research articles, print (or take to printer), fold, stamp and snail mail the letter or email the letter to the membership. You will receive payment for any expenses for the process. Sorry there is no pay for this job, only our gratitude.

Articles for the News Letter

If each member sent one article in to the news letter there would be enough information to fill a whole year of news letters. Now that can't be too hard can it? Family histories, funny family stories, bits and pieces of the census, or old recipes. Email them to me or snail mail them to me would be fine.

Due to the lack of volunteers we will no longer be able to do research or answer any queries for Blackford County. I hope this does not put a hard ship on anyone researching Blackford County. You could try the Blackford County Historical Society for any information you are seeking. If you are in Blackford County and want to Volunteer to do the queries, please let me know and we will re-instate the program. This is for Blackford County only. Wells County has volunteers.

PLEASANT VALLY(NEW LIGHT CHRISTIAN) CHURCH QUILT CA 1898 BLACKFORD COUNTY, INDIANA SIGNED BY CHURCH MEMBERS

Quilted by Mary Wentz

Submitted by Sharon M Mills

The Hoosier Genealogist June 1997

The Bear's Paw design quilted is 97" wide by 74" long, top edge determined by the readability of the inscriptions. "Bear's Paw" squares are between white squares quilted in a "double feather wreath" with variant center pointed petal flower. The red on white quilt has a white "waved feather band" border. Beautifully quilted with 13-14 stitches per running inch, it has been rebound. The transcriber purchased this quilt at an auction in Blackford County. A Blackford County history lists Pleasant Valley New Light Christian Church as formerly existing in the west central part of Jackson Township. Signatures or names are listed here as accurately as possible.

Della Ritter, Lizzie Dildine, Harry Swift, Anna Furnace, William Secrest, Mrs. Harry Swift, Pierce and Kegerreic, Leana Crane, E.J. Winters, Louise Warren, Lloyd Warren, John N. Ross, Gideon Warren, Meintie Tippey, Estella Boyer, James Boyers, Pinkney Sullivan, J.A. Lyon, Hattie Flatter, Bertha Smith, Dan Lunder, Lillie Rawling, J.J. Rawling, Gertrude W. B—, James Fleming, Linus C. Roberts, Marie Marshall (?), Willie R. B—e, Charley Holingshead, John Haynes, Wade Wentz, Laura Fleming, Mrs. H.M. Edison, Wm Lyon, Pearl Wentz, Mary Lyon, Edith Kemp, Martin Kemp, Mrs. P.C. Price, Dorpha Kemp, Becca Peck, Mary Flemming, Issac Jones, L.O. Edison, Nancy Rhoton, M. Hahn, Levnie Hah(n), Abe Hahn, L. Hahn, Charley Lyon, J. H. Collins, Jane Richardson, W.W. Richardson, Sarah Davis, O.C. Everette, H.C. Everette, D.S. Everette, C.R. Everette, Allen Smith, Lizzie Smith, Ella Smith, John Smith, Oppie Blair,(?) Charley Manix, Ira Manix, Lizzie Tait, Oppie Bl—, John Hummer, Bertha Barnhar-, Fannie Smith, John Shotts, Fanny Rogers, Charlie Fleming, Waldo Lyon, Generra Colon, L.D. Colon, Eva Pursley, Mary Colon, Harv(?) Shroyer, D.C. Caldwell, Mrs. A.S. Lyle, A.S. Lyle, Mrs. D.C. Caldwell, A.J. Sanderson, E.M. Sanderson, A.M. Sanderson, J. Hartsook, H.H. Shroyer, Eva M. Shroyer, C.L. Shroyer, C.E. Younce age 58, Rebecca J. Carror, Margaret Thornburgh, George (?) W/ Carrier, Mary C. Thornburgh, Mrs. Harry Sage, Frank Rogers, Verdie Hahn, Cary E. Hahn, Mel Hahn, Charlie Harper, J. H. Marritt, Geo Bolner, Mary Waters, John Brown, E.C. Powell, Hattie Flatter, G. R. Powell, Mary Bradford, J.N. Lanning, W.T. Mannix, Bertha O. Mannix, Mary E. Lanning, James Tait, Mabel Tait, Willie Tait, Rillie Tait, Lettie Tait, E.O. Holdcroft, O.J. Holdcroft, J.S. Holdcroft, S. ? Mannix, C. W. Flatter, M. M. Wilso—, M.A. Flatter, A. A. Wilson, Ruth Flatter, Harry Sage, Frank Weir, N. Edwards, Charley Hickman, M. Edwards, M. Stewart, Sam Waters, A. Stewart, S.C. Schaeffer, Margaret Sink, Carry Smith, Anna Smith, Frank Smith, S.A. Shult, Gladys Smith, Mildred Sink, Mose Whitecotton, Joseph Painter, S.G.,J.G., Mary Shult, B.G. , Charley Wents.

The remainder of names will be in the next news letter.

Membership Form

Name_____

Address_____

City_____ State_____ Zip Code_____

Email Address_____

Surnames Researched:

Membership: \$10.00 a year, \$15.00 family

Due: January 1, 2004

Blackford Wells Genealogy Society
Box 54
Bluffton, IN 46714

To all of our great members with email addresses...