

WHITEWATER VALLEY GENEALOGICAL ASSOCIATION NEWSLETTER

Box 941

Connersville, IN 47331

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Individual membership dues are \$9 and dues for a couple are \$12.00. **DUES ARE DUE JUNE 1.**

Meetings are held the third Tuesday of each month except December.

Website: www.rootswebancestry.com/~inwvga

WVGA MEETINGS

Upcoming meetings will be September 20, October 18 and November 15 at the Trinity Episcopal Parish House.

REUNION

The Franklin County Pioneer Reunion will be held next year.

FGS

FGS Conference "Pathways to the Heartland" will be held September 7-10 at Springfield, Illinois. Go to <http://www.fgs.org/2011conference>

HISTORY FAIR

The third annual Indiana Genealogy & Local History Fair is Saturday October 22 from 9 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. at the Indiana State Library, 315 W. Ohio Street, Indianapolis. Admission is free. There will be displays from genealogical and local history organizations, Indiana public libraries and commercial vendors.

Speakers include Deborah Engleking on "What's New with Family Search" and Loretto Dennis Szucs on "A Dozen Ways to Jump Start Your Family History Project" and "Hidden Sources." Details are available at www.in.gov/library/4189.htm

HERITAGE DAYS

WVGA and HCI are teaming up to have Heritage Days October 22. The Canal House will be draped in mourning of a Civil War Soldier. Individuals will be portraying citizens buried in City Cemetery. John and Mardee

Blommel will be conducting tours. We will have the use of the library and the computer lab. Some of the things we might have for pick up are genealogy forms, a list of websites and applications for membership in WVGA.

DEATH

We are saddened to learn of the death of Helen McCauley on August 18. When she and Everett lived in Connersville, they faithfully attended our meetings. Our sympathy goes out to Everett and family.

BICENTENNIAL

The bicentennial committee meets 2nd and 4th Thursdays at 6 p.m. at the Miller Building in Roberts Park. It took over 500 people to put on the sesquicentennial in 1963 thus a lot more help is needed for the 2013 event. Everyone needs to get involved somewhere. Mike Sparks, who is heading up the bicentennial will be speaking at either our September or October meeting.

HISTORY BOOK

Because the summer was so busy the deadline for biographies for the new county history book has been extended to November 30, 2011. A 500 word biography and 1 picture can be submitted for free. Each additional word is 15 cents each and each additional picture is \$5.00. If your family has been in Fayette County for awhile, it will be difficult to keep your family history to 500 words. You are encouraged to write part of your family history then have another member write part. To see a sample of the book or pick up a brochure, visit the Indiana Room at the library.

NATURALIZATIONS

(Adapted from Family Tree Magazine)

The naturalization process for a foreign-born person to become a US citizen was established in the Constitution. The process involved three steps: The individual had to swear and sign a declaration of intention denouncing the citizenship of another nation and allegiance to its

rules and announcing intention to become a citizen of the US.

After a prescribed waiting period, the person submitted a petition for naturalization. That waiting period has varied over the past two centuries, but the typical duration was five years. When submitting his petition, the person seeking citizenship swore an affidavit stating that the residency period and any other requirements had been satisfied. A witness who knew the applicant also swore an affidavit.

The court then reviewed the documents and, if satisfied, directed that the applicant take an oath of citizenship and that a certificate of naturalization be issued.

The declaration of intention and the petition for naturalization could have been filed in different courts, but proof of the requirements had to be presented to the court where the petition was filed. An excellent book about the naturalization process is *They Became Americans* by Loretto D. Szucs (Ancestry).

FROM THE FILES

Connersville Evening News September 22, 1902

Confirmation Service

On Sunday evening confirmation services were held at Trinity church. Bishop Francis of Indianapolis was present and performed the ceremony of the laying on of hands. The house was crowded by the members and visitors assembled to witness the impressive rites of the church. The candidates for membership were Mrs. Gus Pepper, John Myers, Nanna Abram and Fritz Conwell.

Mrs. J. M. McIntosh sang "Praise the Lord, O my Soul," as an offeratory. The service was a most impressive one.

Connersville Evening News August 16, 1906

Peter Volz Says He Did Not Burn Barn

Peter J. Volz called on the News, last night, to state that he had been a tenant on the Mount Bros. farm for thirteen years and when he retired, a settlement was made which was entirely satisfactory and that he holds no grudge against the Mount brothers.

He says also that he did not set fire to the Mount barn, which burned Tuesday night and that he was in bed when the fire was started.

He said he was going to Mooreland today where he is engaged on bridge work.

Connesville Evening News August 23, 1911

Frybarger Case is Taken to Henry

The suit of Mrs. Ida Martin to set aside the will of her uncle, the late George Frybarger, will be heard next time at New Castle. The case has been in court some time and many *News* readers are familiar with the details. All the parties to the suit reside here. The *Richmond Palladium* of yesterday contains the following.

In what has since become a rather famous will case change of venue was taken from the Wayne to the Henry county circuit court on Tuesday by Sophia Chitwood and other appellants who seek to have the will of George Frybarger, late of Fayette County, broken. The decedent was a large property owner, possessing an estate of the probably value of \$50,000 and at the time he made sound mind and his business managed by a guardian. Suit was first instituted in the Fayette circuit court and from there a change of venue brought it here for trial which was held in 1909. The supreme court reversed the finding of the circuit court and ordered a new trial of the case on the ground error had been made in instructions to the jury. The appellants are given ten days in which to pay costs of a change of venue.

DAVIDSON COUNTY'S PIERCED GRAVESTONES

Standing in several of the oldest cemeteries in Davidson County, North Carolina are some remarkable examples of German folk art. These gravestones are not the earliest in Davidson County, but they are perhaps the most unusual. This is due to the designs which are pierced, or cut through the stone. It is thought that these pierced gravemarkers exist only in Davidson County, for none have been found elsewhere.

The stones are found in seven graveyards in Northern Davidson, all within a radius of about fifteen miles. They appear mainly at the early German Reformed and Lutheran Union churches, founded by European Immigrants from the Palatinate in Germany, Switzerland, and France.

With few exceptions, these gravestones bear German surnames. Yet most have brief inscriptions written in English, showing that by the 1800's the transition from German to English was nearly complete. Few stones bear epitaphs, a particular gravestone feature cherished by the English.

Cut into these unusual gravestones are the folk art symbols of Germanic tradition, each with religious significance. By the 1800's, these designs had probably lost their meaning for Davidson County's German population. Easily executed with a compass, the symbols were likely used on the stones for decorative purposes.

The design most frequently found on the pierced gravestones is a variation of the Greek cross, called the swastika, or fylfot. Shaped in the form of a cross, the ends of the arms are bent at right angles, usually in a clockwise direction. This lovely symbol has an ancient history and has been used by many cultures.

The swastika has had many meanings. Often it represented good luck. As a religious symbol, it stood for continuing life. In ancient Egypt, it was the symbol for the sun, an object of worship by that culture. It is interpreted as a rain sign in Pennsylvania Dutch hex design.

In addition to the pierced designs, other symbols are incised on the stones. These include the rosette, hearts, tulips, birds, rainbows, butterflies, and flowers. Many stones are decorated on both sides. Backs of some markers are as handsome as the fronts, with intricate rope figures sculpted on a surface of three or four facets.

While some of these stones were made of slate, the majority were carved from native soapstone, a soft but durable material containing talc. This stone, easily carved with a knife, was found in abundance in Davidson County.

After approximately one hundred fifty years, the pierced gravestones remain in good shape, despite the fact that soapstone literally decays and wears away with weather and age. There has been a growing tendency to line gravestones in rows to facilitate mowing, and many of these beautiful old stones have been imbedded in cement, covering much of the valuable inscription. Others have been damaged beyond repair by vandalism and careless summer mowing practices. Every effort should be made to preserve these handsome German stones, because they are most likely a unique form of folk art commemorating our early German forbears in Davidson County.

(Original article transcribed by Julia E. Miller, Thomasville Library, Davidson County Public Library System)

Thanks to Kathy Keller for sharing this.

FIFTIETH ANNIVERSARY, FAIRVIEW HIGH SCHOOL 1890-1940

Excerpts from History of Fairview High School by Cora L. Saxon

"Footprints in the sands of time" must be carefully studied if we are to understand present conditions.

Indiana, carved from the Northwest Territory and admitted into the Union as a state in 1816, had many natural advantages that were of interest to home seekers. This part of Fayette County, now

known as Fairview Township, was not thrown open to settlement or purchase until 1820, although obtained by treaty with the Delaware Indians in October of 1818. The township as it stands was not organized until December 4, 1851.

As soon as the land was available, the large, white covered wagons drawn by plodding oxen were soon winding their way from the south and east toward the "Promised Land." But land must be cleared, cabins built, swamps drained and diseases peculiar to undeveloped regions combated, and it was not until four years later that Robert Groves gave land for the establishment of a school just over the Rush County line, this section being included in the New Purchase. This log cabin with its clapboard roof and puncheon floor was used as a Methodist Church as well as a school and was built where the cemetery church now stands. Miss Sarah Gifford was the first teacher. The first house in the present village of Fairview was erected in 1828.

A Christian Church, with a membership of forty, was organized in 1842 and housed in a neat frame building on the Rush County side. It was due to certain members of this church and some of its preachers that the Academy was ready for occupancy in the fall of 1850, with Professor Benton as principal. Fairview now became known as an educational center. This school wielded its splendid influence for thirty-five years, being the forerunner of what is now Butler University. Improvements in laws governing the free schools and the establishment of other denominational schools and colleges led to the closing of this school in 1885. Five years later, or in the fall of 1890, the first Fairview High School was ready with R. L. Thiebaud as principal and J. H. Hackleman the trustee. Thiebaud was the county superintendent. Thiebaud and Hackleman realized a worthy ambition in the completion of a four-room frame building.

Three pupils had completed the common grades at the Fairview school the previous term. They

were Misses Lillie Hannah, Anna Higley and Ethel Baker. The teacher, Samuel Powell, gave the young ladies certificates showing that they had accomplished the desired work.

It is said to have been during the holiday vacation that the school building burned in 1903. The majority of the pupils lost their books. As soon as possible, the Falmouth I.O.O.F. was made ready and the term continued, but no commencement was held.

Trustee J. B. Wiles with the approval of his advisory board began to plan for a four-room brick building on the same site having it ready for occupancy for the term of 1904-1905.

Ernest Jeffrey, a strong advocate of properly directed athletic sports, was very anxious for an addition to the school building which could be used as a gymnasium, or as an auditorium when needed. The Parent-Teacher work was then under the direction of the State Club Federation, its object being the promotion of greater co-operation between patrons and school officials. In 1912 Mrs. W. E. Ochiltree, a state official, and Mrs. Cora L. Saxon, district chairman of the work, with the consent of Mr. Jeffrey, organized the first rural Parent-Teacher group in the state.

On June 13, 1913 Trustee H. N. Jeffrey and his advisory board, T. E. Murphy, J. W. Hackleman and, U. G. Hinchman, voted unanimously for the building of an annex which also included two more upper rooms.. This was not completed till the fall of 1914.

Fairview was the first graded school in the county outside of Connersville, the graduating class of 1917 being the first class to receive legal classification. The school was certified but not commissioned until 1920.

For 27 years Miss Vina Lockhart was the teacher of the primary room (1914-1940). Her former pupils realized that they owed her a debt of gratitude for her instruction and influence. The education that best prepares us for life's battles must be built on a firm foundation.