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# HENDRICKS COUNTY

## HISTORY BULLETIN



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H C H S

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H C H S

That I may publish with the voice of Thanksgiving, and tell of all thy wondrous works. - Psalms 26:7

Let us give thanks!

H C H S

Save for its sweet memories or poignant regrets, Yesterday is beyond recall. Tomorrow, with its possible pleasures and pains, its successes and failures, is but a vague promise, as far beyond human grasp as its ghostly sister, Yesterday. You are to have nothing to do with these far-away nothings. Today is your day. All the preceding days have been spent in preparation for it. Today lays at your feet accumulated treasures of a lifetime. This is the day to live, to journey, and to do!

August 14, 1977

Our Society met August 14th at the beautiful new Tri West High School at Lizton. Our president, Mary Jennette Winkleman presided and introduced Mr. Zelinski, Superintendent of North West Schools, who welcomed us and invited us to take a tour of the building. After devotions by the Rev. Richardson, routine business was disposed of. Dorothy Kelley gave us an excellent report on the Museum and a fund to buy folding chairs for the use of groups using the facility was started. A grand opening is planned for November 20th. Mary Ann Moore presented a delightful original pageant which she entitled "The Lighter Footsteps" portraying the various roles women have played through the years, including the Indiana Woman, the Pioneer Woman, the School Marm, the women in government, and the women in uniform. She described graphically how the "Lighter Footsteps" of women have taken them everywhere as doctors, clerks, editors, jurors, nurses, missionaries, professors, always with the gentle touch that only a woman can bring to an endeavor. We hope this fine paper is already reposing in the files at the Museum. We would also like to point out that our Society has unusual talent in the pen of Mary Ann Moore. May we hear more from her. The lovely ladies of Eel River, Union and Middle Townships served delicious refreshments from such a pretty table and there were so many interesting items on display. Somehow, meeting after meeting, I get the feeling that the H C H S is a very special organization composed of lots of very special people. Our attendance shows it ...68 members were present.

H C H S

Our next meeting will be held November 13 at the White Lick Presbyterian Church, which is south of Brownsburg and north of Avon. If you come by way of Road # 267, turn west at 10th Street. When you cross the bridge, turn right, (north), and follow the winding old "crick" road and you will soon come to the picturesque little "old church in the wildwood". If you come through Danville, take 10th Street until you almost run into the "crick"; turn left, or north, and follow the same trail.

This program is another one you won't want to miss. Gerald Jones will tell us a lot about "The History of Advertising". Advertising is a fascinating subject and it has changed greatly in the last century or more. When one compares some of our present day ads and TV commercials to the ones in old, old papers, one realizes that, in modern vernacular, "you have come a long way, baby!" But whether progress is *improvement*, or not, we will leave it to Mr. Jones to decide for us. A little bird has told us that Gerald has a collection of original ads he wrote many years ago (in rhyme, no less) and that will be a special treat for us.

Mildred Hosier and Frances English head up the hostess committee which will include Brown, Lincoln and Washington Townships. A real special day awaits us.

A few words about the history of the White Lick Church might be appropriate here. Early in the summer of 1835, William Wilson and his family, together with three of his married daughters and their families, formed a colony of about 25 persons who moved from Bedford County, Virginia, to Hendricks County, Indiana, and settled in what is known as the White Lick neighborhood. Here they established their homes and later gave the land upon which the first White Lick Church was built.

They lived the life common to the early settlers and the monuments in the little White Lick Cemetery, which was originally the Wilson Cemetery (across the road from the church) have recorded in stone the tragedies of this little colony. The tombstones (still standing) are mute evidence of the affects of the cholera plague and the other diseases that swept this part of the country in 1840 to 1842. Records in this cemetery show that two young husbands and fathers died in 1840, another in December, 1841, and his brother 15 days later, January 1842, leaving young widows and orphans. These widows continued to live on their adjoining farms until their children were grown.

It was in this cemetery, in 1935, that the Wa-pe-ke-way Chapter of the Daughters of the American Revolution started the practice of marking the graves of daughters of Revolutionary soldiers. In appropriate ceremonies, September 5, 1935, they placed

a marker over the grave of Nancy Mitchell Wilson, daughter of Stephen Mitchell, Revolutionary soldier. It is fitting that our Historical Society meet in this beautiful, picturesque setting of such significance to the history of Hendricks County.

#### H C H S

The following is a talk which was given at the ceremonies marking the grave of Nancy Mitchell Wilson at the White Lick Cemetery, September 5, 1935. It was given by one of the younger descendants of this daughter of a Revolutionary soldier.

"I appear before you as one of the younger descendants of Nancy Mitchell Wilson, whose memory we are honoring today. My father's mother (my grandmother) was the last living person who bore the family name of Wilson. She was the daughter of Stephen Wilson and his wife, Margaret. He was the last surviving son of William Wilson and his wife Nancy, the daughter of a Revolutionary soldier.

In honoring her memory, we honor that of her father, the Revolutionary patriot who offered his life to his country at a time that tried men's souls. Ample documentary evidence in my father's possession proves that Nancy Mitchell Wilson's father, Stephen Mitchell, volunteered on December 26, 1777, the day after Washington smashed the Hessians at Trenton. He was a member of Captain George Lambert's company, in Col. Charles Lewis' 14th Virginia regiment, in General Green's division of Washington's army. Let us think for a moment of the important service in which our ancestor must have had a part. There was that night march followed by the Battle of Princeton in January, 1777; then army encampment life at Morristown, New Jersey, with constant scouting and fighting against the British in New Jersey; then the Battles of Brandywine and Germantown, two of the most fiercely fought battles of the Revolution. After that came the awful winter at Valley Forge during part of which our ancestor must have been present. Washington's army saw more service and fought more battles in the year 1777 than in any other year of the Revolutionary War.

What wonderful and interesting accounts our Revolutionary ancestor must have been able to give his daughter Nancy, this pioneer woman, whose memory we are here to honor.

An even hundred years have now passed since she, with her husband, William Wilson, and children and with others made what was then the long and tedious journey from Bedford County, Virginia, to where we are now. The state was then only nineteen years old. The hardships of pioneer life here 100 years ago can better be imagined than described. There was the unbroken wilderness where pioneers made their start, when they erected their rude log cabins and were doomed for years to wrest only the scantiest of livings from the beginnings of a clearing in the primeval forest. They fought beasts and took chances on starvation, as well as other perils wholly unknown in our day. Of the comforts and conveniences of our modern life, they knew nothing. Schools and opportunities for religious worship were either lacking or of the most meager kind. Money was scarce and death took huge tolls from pioneer life. Malaria, cholera, and typhoid, of which my great-grandfather Wilson died, were among the pioneer's greatest enemies.

I sometimes think that those pioneers were made of sterner stuff than most of us of the younger generations, who of us present today would care to undertake such a life as they of necessity had to live a hundred years ago? I dare say not one.

The lot of the pioneer mothers, such as our ancestor, Nancy Mitchell Wilson, must have been hardest. In her rude log cabin home, hundreds of miles from her former home and friend and kindred, whom she could never hope to see again, with an endless round of exacting labor and with nothing to vary such a monotonous daily round of duties, her life must have been lonely indeed as she rocked her babies to sleep at the close of the day while listening to the hooting of the owl and the howling of the wolves in the not distant forest. We of the younger generation owe a debt to these pioneers.

I sometimes think that we do not fully appreciate what they did. Without their beginnings, in suffering and in hardship, our present civilization could not have developed. It was they who laid the foundations upon which we who came later, have builded. They wrought better than they knew, and to them belongs all honor. As a pioneer mother, Nancy Mitchell Wilson contributed her full share. She deserves all the honor which we today may bestow upon her memory."

H C H S

Susan Miller Carter sent this little rhyme which she found in the December, 1905, Amo School paper, The Blue and White. Does anyone know who "Little Billy" is? or was? Let us hear from you old Amo Alums.

If A was a lively Japanese,  
One thing I'd like to know,  
If all the hay was cut, now, please,  
How much did Amo?

If Had was an ambitious hen,  
That always had her way  
And always cackled when  
Now, where did Hadley?

If Ren was a pretty girl,  
And she was minus dough,  
And she should buy a costly pearl,  
How much would Reno?

If Coatsvi was a naughty boy,  
And ever done his will,  
And always did play with a dangerous toy  
Now, what made Coatsville?

If Peck was an old miser,  
Who built a little berg,  
Then someone buys her  
Is she still Pecksburg?

--- By Little Billy.

H C H S

Rosalie D. Hambley's ledger was mentioned in August Bulletin. The following is one of the first entries:

"January 1876

Pecksburg is an enterprising little vilage of about fifty inhabitants, situated on the Indianapolis and Terre Haute railroad about twenty-three miles from Indianapolis. It is located in the beautiful valley, excelling in beauty any other part of Mill creek bottom. On the north and east spread out before the gazing eye beautiful meadows of living green; on the south lies beautiful forests giving a pleasant resort to pleasure and game seekers. On the west flows smoothly and majestically along the West Fork of Mill creek. If ever you should come to Pecksburg you will never forget the place.

It contains two stores at which can be had at any time a fine assortment of dry goods, extremely dry - beer on hand for years - hats, caps, boots, shoes shaws for summer and slippers for winter wear, clocks lamps, buttons and coat oil cans.

At No 34, on the west side of Main st. Wm. Shirley has the "Cheap Cash Store" to which he very respectfully invites all who wish to purchase anything in his line. He also desires the public to understand that he keeps a fine assortment of books, stationary, etc, and will "back" letters and "lick" stamps and forward or hand over letters as desired.

On the northeast corner of public square M. Roberts stands behind the counter and sells patent medicine, hair oil, coffee, dry goods etc. He has improved his premises by adding a kitchen and pantry to the rear of his establishment.

Mr. Charles Kelley has retired from show business and is now about to furnish the public anything in the way of harness. Call on him at West Main Street north of the railroad. Elec Archer still hammers on the anvil while Archer junior plays on the banjo. No. 38 East side Main St. south of railroad. All who wish to see themselves on tin plate should call at the picture gallery 29 East Pennsylvania street. John Barthalomew thinks he can take as good a picture as the original will permit of. Marshall and Archer deal in hides and leathers keep boots and shoes and will heel the soles of anyone who will apply. Sign- Red-top boots. Pennsylvania Street. Reitzel brothers think they can build as good woodsheds as any one else in the county and that is now their occupation, all who wish any work in that line should call on them 144 Kentucky avenue.

There is a good school house in the suburbs of the vilage at which three score and ten young Americans are being brought up in the way they should go under the instruction of Miss Cecilia Hadley.

The inhabitants of this vilage generally go well clad as they are well supplied with Taylors. Though there are no amazons or brick layers there are several Archers. Though the town is not incorporated, the people are obliged to be peaceable as there are two Marshalls, who faithfully discharge their duties.

If there ever was any wood at Peckburg is is all burned up now and the remainder can only be pointed out by a few old A(r)sh(e)rs which would have been donated to some old woman's ask barrell but the public thought they couldn't Trust(h)er. The people of Peckburg have to climb fences as there is only one Picket without a single well-organized gate.

The town can boast of not being all paupers as there are at least two Rich(ard)-sons despite the Poor people of the place.

There is no stealing done in this town for the merchants of Ritesell some things, through we are sorry to say there are some Rober(t)s.

You are not obliged to go far west to Hunt and strange to say you can travel in either of three directions and reach the West."

H C H S

The followin letter came from Mr. John Durham, Reno, Nev. It is a copy of a letter written by his great grandfather, John Durham (B1808 Mercer Co., Ky. D 1875) from Fairview (Waveland area) in Montgomery Co. to his father, John Durham (B 1774 -D. 1855) Perryville, Ky. The baby mentioned was Mr. Durham's grandfather, John Durham (B1838 - D. 1921) who was a well known farmer in the northeast portion of Eel River Township between North Salem and Jamestown:

John Durham  
Perryville, Kentucky

October 31, 1839

Dear Father,

We are tolerable health at this time with the rest of our relations. Jeremiahs health at this time is improveing. I think he has not got the hips as bad as he had it some time back. The ballance of his family is in tolerable health. There has been some sickness in the neighborhood this fawl. Mr. Canine has had serious time with sickness in his family. He has lost a daughter and daughter in law and there is five of this family down now and some of them not expected to live.

Corn crops are wrather light with frost injured late corn considerably. Wheat was first rate. I made 70 bushel this season. It is worth 47½ per bushel. I have understood that Mr. Web toald the people in Kentucky that ther wa lots of corn that would make fifteen barrells to the acre here. He is a man that makes very extra-vigant calculations.

I received the money you sent \$8. The collector has not been around yet and also received \$6 from Samuel by Mr. Webb. Times are verry dull here at present. Corn is worth one doljer. It is not known yet what poark will be worth there as the poark merchants has not began to engage any as yet.

November the 3

We arewell csgn Lang is complaning with a misery in the back and hips. He has suffer-ed a goodeal. Huldah Canine is down with the fever but not dangerous. Oald Mrs. Harper is verry low with the tifus fever.

Small grain looks well considering the time it was put in the ground. We have had quite warm weather this fawl though remarcable changeable infact the somer was verry much....People here has cornonabit are gathering ther corn.

There is a suspension of work on the publick works in this state for the want of funds. I believe a prety jeneral suspension with the banks.

John is 18 months oald today and his mother has not taken the breast from him yet. He begins to talk. You aught to come and see him as he is a name sake and a tolerable looking fellow. I think you might if your health would permit come out this fawl and see your friends. The time might pass pleasantly. We would be verry glad to see you.

I cleared about 8 acres of ground this fawl and roled and burnt to one acre. It has been dry and fine for burning this fawl. As ever was, tell Samuel I have not complied with his request yet and that I will try and send him a few lines before long.

I soald a mull coalt this fawl for \$22½ on time 6 months with intres from the time I delivered it. When I commensed this letter I could think of nothing that sould intrest you more than to hear that we were well. We trust these lines may find you and family and friends well. Give my respects to the family relations and friends and receive them to your self.

Your affectionate son till death,

John Durham"

H C H S

When the Bulletin is in your hands, Hallowe'n will have passed, but as we go to press, pumpkins grin from front porches, dime stores (did I day dime?) are filled with false faces, costumes, and all kinds of Hallowe'n reminders, and children everywhere are shivering in Spook Houses, thrilling over treasures fished from fish ponds, throwing corn, trick or treating and a few are thrilling over the fact that I just never can guess who they are (with 6 small grandchildren of all shapes and sizes, some plump, some skinny, some with tell-tale front teeth out, I guess every one from Farrah Fawcett-Majors to Jimmy Carter and never seem to recognize my own flesh and blood!).

So it is only natural at this season the again I am looking at and loving one of my dearest possessions. It is a black envelope, post marked "Clayton, Indiana, October 1897". It is addressed in White ink to "Miss Nora Walsh, Clayton, Indiana" and is complete with a one-cent stamp. Inside this envelope is a black card and also in white ink, is a shetch of an owl, on a limb, with a spider-web, and the following jingle:

"Wilder, wilder, oh wist  
Listen, oh listen to this,  
All Hallowe'en night  
Fore the moon sinks from sight  
Seek ye out a white house in the gloom,  
A lantern ye'll see  
Swinging out from a tree  
To lead you inside  
Where the witches will hide  
To tell ye your fortune or doom."

Olympion Club  
Clayton, Indiana

I have, also, a nicely printed program of the Olympion Club for 1897-98, and I have noticed that Miss Walsh and a certain Mr. Fletcher Franklin were often on the same program. A beautiful diary kept by Miss Walsh during these years records in the fall of 1898, "Mr. Franklin and I took a ride after the meeting tonight. This night will be long remembered by two people".

On September 6, 1899, Miss Nora Walsh and Mr. Fletcher Franklin were married. Miss Walsh had been primary teacher at Clayton and Mr. Franklin had been the principal of the schools, but was, at the time, surveyor of Hendricks County.

So please pardon your Editor for a bit of sweet nostalgia as I say a soft thank-you to the Clayton Schools for bringing my mother and father together and to the Olympion Club for helping to nurture that romance, for if that marriage had not occurred, I can't help but wonder where I would be today!

H C H S

#### CEMETERY SLEUTHS

Our "Cemetery Sleuths", Cox and Pritchard, are still keeping busy, although they haven't received much publicity recently. Their most recent concern is that some of the stones in the East Cemetery at Danville have settled as deeply that they can hardly be seen except by standing directly over them. And even then it is hard to decipher the names and dates. They are sure some of those stones mark soldiers' graves, and it is sad to think that in a short time they will sink into oblivion and no one will ever know, or care, that they were once there. Has anyone any suggestions to remedy this condition?

(Editor's note: I am sure most of you have noticed the modern trend to refer to females, as well as males, by their last names only. I frown on this practice, but what can you expect with Women's Lib? So for the information of you readers of the Old School, the Cox-Pritchard team is, of course, Miss Grace Cox and Mrs. Roy Pritchard. (And there will be no Ms. as long as this editor does the typing!)

H C H S

#### Cemetery Sleuths or Vandals?

The above mentioned "Cemetery Sleuths" will be surprised to read this story:

A few weeks ago the president of the Danville South Cemetery Board received a telephone call reporting that vandals had been at work in the South Cemetery and had spray-painted several of the old stones with green paint. The poor harried gentleman heaved an exasperated sigh and set out to inspect the damage. After all it wouldn't have been the first time vandals had paid that cemetery a visit. Imagine, then, his relief when he discovered that the "spray paint" was only green chalk



dust left there by our "Cemetery Sleuths" who had been busily recording inscriptions. And after a good rain, there will be no trace of green.

H C H S

### INDEX FOR OUR HISTORY BOOK

The 640 page History of Hendricks County 1914-1976 contains the history of hundreds of families as well as the history of the government and government officials of this county. This represents over 10,000 names. Obviously an index was needed so it is being prepared as a separate booklet.

The indexing is being done by Ruth Darrell of the Shelbyville Library and it will be printed by Starcken Printing of Plainfield. They promise us the 8½ by 11", approximately 64 page booklet before Christmas. The price is \$1.50 and orders may be mailed to Hendricks County History Book, Box 128, Danville, Indiana 46122. Every owner of the History Book should have this supplemental booklet.

H C H S

### CENTURY OLD CLIPPINGS

by Grace Cox

UNION-May 15, 1879

Brownsburg-Fletcher Lowe has laid out a town on the new railroad near John Corliss's. If it is true as reported, that Fletcher intends to open out a whiskey shop, he had better have a mill stone tied about his neck and have it thrown into Peterson's Pond before he begins business.

Local Matters-The Court House tower is becoming a popular loafing place for the boys. The best way to keep flees off a dog, says the Enquirer, is to shoot the dog.

UNION-May 22, 1879

Even the Democrats now spell Nation with a capital N.

Plainfield Friends-Promenading and lounging in the beautiful shade in "Friends Park" is being revived by the young folks. All very nice, but Please shut the gate.

When Wood Kellum and Ame Alderson both get in a one horse buggy, you had better keep your fingers from under the springs.

UNION - May 22, 1879

When you want a prescription filled, call on the prince of druggists, Will Cox, at H. M. Smiths.

Smoke the "Moss Agate"

The Moss Agate at the P. O.

The "Moss Agate" is the best cigar in town

Paper Shirt-Fronts, at W. H. McPhetridge's.

Take a nickel and buy one of those delicious "Moss Agates", for sale only at the Post Office.

The court house yard is the popular loafing place for the boys. No lawn mower will be needed to keep the grass short this summer.

## GRAND OPENING FOR THE MUSEUM

Sunday, November 20, is the day set for the Grand Opening of the Hendricks County Historical Museum according to Dorothy Kelley and her corps of helpers. If you haven't been there recently, you are in for a pleasant surprise. The roof has been fixed and papering and painting is in progress as we go to press.

One of our recent acquisitions is a most interesting medical exhibit which has been collected and prepared by the Brownsburg Girl Scout Troop # 1010 under the guidance and advise of Sharon Calhoun. The girls have done a tremendous job and the exhibit itself is worth a visit to the museum.

A number of visitors dropped by during the Swap and Shop Days. We had a caller from the Indiana State Museum who had some nice things to say about our project. We can never thank Dorothy Kelley, Jewell Bell, Grace Cox, Mary Ann Moore and many others who have spent countless hours and great efforts toward this endeavor. They are certainly giving the Hendricks County Historical Society and Hendricks County something to be most proud of. Our hats are off to them!

H C H S

We thank the Belleville Bible Church for furnishing the back cover page for our bulletin, When it was thought appropriate to have a history of the old church they offered to do even more. The article, written by Phyllis West Parson, (Mrs. John O.) and Ruth Mitchell Pritchard (Mrs. Roy) tells the story well, and we are grateful to them.

We congratulate the Belleville Bible Church on their acquisition of the lovely old landmark and we wish them well in the future.

H C H S