## Starke County 13

September 5, 2008

"Tidbits of Starke County History".....

During the Harvest Fest held in Knox each year, the Starke County Historical Society invites six High School Seniors from the three schools in the county to be historic/architectural tour guides for the Starke County Courthouse. They explain the features of the outside of the Courthouse and interesting details on all eight floors leading up to the clock and bell. We also give these tours to special groups throughout the year.

One thing that we mention on the tour is the **space tree** that is on the northwest corner of the Courthouse lawn. Yes, a space tree! Attached is a photo of the Sycamore space tree. Astronaut Jerry Ross, a native of Crown Point, Indiana, carried Sycamore seeds aboard the Space Shuttle "Atlantis" on its flight in early December of 1988. This was a promotion by the Purdue Extension Service and the 4-H clubs of Indiana. Each county in Indiana was given a seedling Sycamore tree to plant as the culmination of the 75th anniversary of the Purdue Extension Service in the spring of 1990. Jerry and his wife Karen (NASA food expert) also planted a Sycamore space seedling at Purdue to commemorate the impact that 4-H experiences had on their lives. Read more about Col. Ross at <a href="http://www.jsc.nasa.gov/Bios/htmlbios/ross.html">http://www.jsc.nasa.gov/Bios/htmlbios/ross.html</a>

Carl Goodrich, Courthouse custodian, said that the little tree had a hard time growing straight for the first few years. Was this because the germinating seed was on a flight in space or was it just the nature of that particular seedling? We will never know!

Jim Shilling Starke County Historical Society

http://www.starkehistory.com
http://www.scpl.lib.in.us/historical/

(If you do not wish to receive "Tidbits of Starke County History" in the future, please let me know.)

