"Tidbits of Starke County" No. 32 ---- **KOP**

The event that changed the social, economic and political scene in Starke County perhaps more than any other event in this county's history, was WWII. Specifically, the KOP (Kingsbury Ordnance Plant) changed the face of Starke County!

I mention this to let you know about an interesting program to be presented by Wally Smith about the Kingsbury Ordnance Plant. The presentation will be at the LaPorte County Historical Society Museum, January 19, 2010 at 7:00 p.m. Central Time. The Museum is located on the south side of LaPorte at 2405 Indiana Avenue (U.S 35). Wally has a collection of memorabilia from the plant and will display shells, ammunition boxes, diagrams and photographs. See attached word document.

Some history of the KOP for you younger generations -----

During the WW II and Korean wars, hundreds of people from **Starke County** and the surrounding area worked in the Kingsbury Ordnance Plant in LaPorte County. Parkview and other areas in Knox were built to house the many people that migrated to this area to work in the Ordnance Plant in 1941-42. A photo collection of the building of Parkview in Knox can be seen on our historical web site - http://www.scpl.lib.in.us/historical/scpl_files/Page470.htm, then scroll down almost to the bottom and click on "Building of Parkview".

The Kingsbury Ordnance Plant (KOP) was located east of Kingsbury, Indiana. It started producing shells, cartridges and mortar rounds in 1941 for use in the European and Pacific theaters of World War II. More than **13,000** acres were set aside for the facility. By May 1942, there were more than **20,000** employees working at the site. After the war ended in August 1945, the plant began closing but it was briefly reopened in 1951 due to the Korean War. When I was in the Army in Fort Knox and in Germany during the late 1950's, we were using 76 mm.KOP shells for training.

Now, it is mostly an industrial park. However, the Indiana State Kingsbury Nature Preserve occupies an area of about 5200 acres. In addition to hunting and fishing, there is a seemingly endless list of other outdoor activities, including wildlife watching. Scattered stands of conifers and hardwoods attract hawks, owls, bald eagles, shorebirds, wading birds and a wide variety of resident and migrating songbirds. Other activities include family camping in the rustic camp grounds, hiking, picnicking, shooting range, wildlife watching, nuts and berry gathering, and photography. It's also a fabulous place to escape the city lights and experience true star gazing with numerous areas to set up a telescope or just lie on your back and gaze up.

To learn more about Kingsbury and Kingsford Heights, click here - http://www.visitlaportecounty.com/static/index.cfm?contentID=138

To see an aerial map of the ordnance plant, click here - http://www.satellite-sightseer.com/id/15287

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.)



La Porte County Historical Society, Inc.

Meeting at the La Porte County Historical Society Museum

2405 Indiana Avenue (US#35) At south entrance to La Porte

Tuesday, January 19, 2010 7:00 p.m. Business Meeting

PROGRAM:

"Kingsbury Ordnance Plant"

Presented by:

Wally Smith

He will tell of KOP's role in providing ammunition for the war effort in WWII and the Korean War. He has a collection of memorabilia from the plant and will display shells, ammunition boxes, diagrams and photographs.

Guests are welcome. Facility is handicapped accessible. For further information about the society and its museum please visit: http://www.laportecountyhistory.org.

