Starke County tidbit ---

Drainage in Starke County has been a subject in the news over the years. This year is no exception, with all of the roads that have been closed because of flooding. With our 600+ miles of roads and our 600+ miles of ditches, we are quite fortunate to be able to drive from almost any point in the county to where we want to go. This was not always the case. We often forget what the early families in the county had to put up with. My father was born north of Hamlet in 1893 on what is now called 550 E, just south of the La Porte County line, on a small sand "island" in the swamp. He often told me, "If we wanted to get to Hamlet or Knox, we had to use a boat 6 months out of the year". Others have related similar stories, like being able to ice skate from north of North Judson to Lacrosse or from Knox to Brems during the winter months.

Hundreds of school children visit the Starke County Museum each year. One of the programs we give them is on the drainage of the county, with maps similar to the attached map of "Stark". This is an 1852 map. The blue line indicates the county boundary at the time the county was formed by the state legislature in 1835. However, because of the "Grand Marsh" and the large English Lake, the state legislature in 1842 gave the northwestern portion of Starke County to La Porte County - notice the dotted line (the new boundary) through the middle of English Lake. That area, (then known as Van Buren Township) now includes the towns of Wanatah, La Crosse and Hanna. Our county, with the increase in population to 557, became officially an organized county in 1850.

Other items to study on the attached map:

- the village of Piqua, southeast of where North Judson is today. (Notice the roads (trails) from Piqua, generally traveling along the high ground with portions in the swamp being "corduroy". <u>http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Corduroy road</u>)
- - other towns, including North Bend, Buena Vista and Knox.
- - the proposed New Albany and Salem Railroad that was built in 1853.
- - the two mills east of Knox in Washington Township. (Samuel Koontz built his mill at Koontz Lake in1849, but it doesn't show up on this 1852 map.)

Other Starke County maps may be seen on our web sites. <u>http://www.scpl.lib.in.us/historical/</u> and <u>http://www.starkehistory.com</u>

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