

Starke County Historical Society

THE PRIDE OF STARKE COUNTY

WINTER 2003

Newsletter

1903 The year of the airplane.

This year represents one hundred years of aviation. On December 17, 1903, Wilbur and Orville Wright made the first successful power flight near Kitty Hawk, NC. Many celebrations will be going on across the United States this year, especially in Dayton, OH, and Kitty Hawk, NC. Those of you interested in the activities planned at Dayton, OH can look at the Website.....

www.inventingflight.com

Local interest in historic aviation was spurred in January this year with a visit to Starke County by Bob Collings of the Collings Foundation. The Foundation owns many vintage aircraft of WWII as well as a large collection of automobiles. The Foundation also owns a replica of the Vin Fiz, the 1911 Wright airplane that was the first to fly coast-to-coast across the United States.

The flight was sponsored by the Armour Meat Packing Company and was used to promote its new grape soft drink, Vin Fiz. Calbraith Perry Rodgers, the pilot, painted the words Vin Fiz on the Wright EX biplane before departing.

The plane followed the railroads across the United States both for navigation purposes and for the three-car support train that followed him. Cal Rodgers had many mishaps along his journey, such as being chased by a bull, landing on cactus in Texas, and crashing into a chicken house.



With at least 12 major crashes and many more minor mishaps, the only parts of the original airplane to finally reach the Pacific Ocean were one wing strut and one of the rudders. All of the other parts, including two engines, had to be replaced along the way from his railroad tool car. The plane's journey traveled through Starke County, landing near Aldine. Bob Collings' visit here was to determine the exact location. After looking at old maps, reading newspaper accounts and listening to interviews of people who saw the plane land, we found the location.

A history book on the Vin Fiz mentions that the plane landed in Starke County on the William and Della Milne farm. This farm now belongs to the Bortell family and is located about one mile west of Bass Station in California Twp.

Photo Indexing Project

Thanks to Ann Shearin, Tom and Denise Shearin, Marvin Allen, the Town and Country Extension Club and many individuals who contributed photos and time, we got off to a good start in our Photo Indexing Project. The Indiana Humanities Council and the Indiana Historical Society sponsored the grant. Photographs of Starke County from the Museum,

the Starke County Library and from many individuals have been scanned into the computer and then saved on CDs. The original photographs in the Museum collection are then put into archival folders and stored to help preserve them for future generations.

The photographs that are now scanned can be duplicated for display purposes. They can be e-mailed or reprinted on archival paper. They can be made larger or smaller. If the photo is of good quality, an individual may be selected from a group photo and enlarged - all kinds of possibilities. So far, Marvin Allen has scanned more than 8000 historic photographs.

If you have an interesting historic photo of Starke County, a class school picture or even family pictures that you would like to have in our database, please call Marvin Allen at 574-772-5936.

The Society held two photo workshops during the 2002 year. Joan Hostetler from the Hoosier Heritage Photo Services of Indianapolis presented an interesting program on the preservation and care of old family photos. Ann Shearin and Marvin Allen demonstrated how the computer can be used to index and preserve photographs.



Hotel Ferch in Hamlet, Indiana, is one of the many photographs in our collection.



Lois Varro Retires

For years, Lois Varro has been very active in the Starke County Museum, as a volunteer, a contributor and as a receptionist. Over the years, she was a tour guide for thousands of visitors, including hundreds of school children from area schools. For school classes she would make special folders and an origami cardinal for each child. Many of these school children would come back later to the museum with grandma or grandpa to show them something special about the museum. Lois arranged different displays in the museum to help show off the history of Starke County. We will miss Lois on a daily basis in the museum, but she says she will still help out occasionally as a volunteer. And she has! She recently was in the museum to help Peg Brettin set up the Christmas tree and decorations for the Holidays. She also brought in her antique valentines for a special February display. Thank you, Lois, for all of your time and dedication to the Starke County Historical Society.

Dates to remember in 2003:

July 6	Ice Cream Social
November 20	Annual Meeting
November 30	Christmas Open House

MUSEUM HOURS DURING FEBRUARY
Tuesday and Wednesday 12 to 4 pm

ANNUAL MEETING

The Starke County Historical Society annual meeting was held on November 21, 2002, at the Knox High School Cafeteria. The program for the evening was about the Lincoln Highway. Peter Youngman, Indiana Director of Lincoln Highway Association showed maps and slides of buildings and views along the original Lincoln Highway as it crossed through Northern Indiana. The program was especially interesting, because many of the places he showed were familiar local landmarks. Since locating more of the special Lincoln Highway markers is a goal of his association, Mr. Youngman was pleased to learn of the location of two more markers in Starke County that evening.



The Starke County Icon on the new \$105 million Indiana State Museum in Indianapolis was designed by Jeff Laramore, nephew of the late Roger Laramore of Knox. The line running across it represents the Lincoln Highway.

A trip to the new State Museum from Starke County may be offered this spring. Interested? Call Ed Hasnerl at WKVI, 574-772-6241.

Another February Exhibit



Each year during February, Lois Varro brings her wonderful collection of hundreds of Valentine cards to display at the museum. Many of these cards date back to the 1800's. They are of interest to young and old alike. If you missed this exhibit before, come to the museum during February.



John Brock of the Henry F. Schricker Library and Marvin Allen of the Starke County Historical Society have teamed up to put old Starke County photographs on the world wide web.

You can see these beautiful photos at <http://www.scpl.lib.in.us/historical/scpl.htm>



Kiwanis

Jim Shilling was the guest speaker at the Knox Kiwanis, January 28, 2003, at the Knox Community Center. Since this year of 2003 is the 100th anniversary of the first flight of man in a heavier than air machine, he spoke of the landing of the first airplane in Starke County between Bass Station and Aldine, Indiana. The occasion was the first flight across the United States from ocean to ocean. He presented illustrations of the airplane, its support train and an audio tape of Mrs. Edna (Bailey) Winters, who witnessed the plane and its landing in 1911. If your group would like a short lively presentation about the "Flight of the Vin Fiz", call Jim at 574-772-4311.

Special Museum

Programs



The museum was host to two organizations this year. In an outreach effort of the Society, the museum has been offered as a meeting place for small groups desiring a program on some phase of Starke County history. Two groups who met at the museum for their business meeting and

program were: The Center Homemakers Club and the Starke County Genealogical Society. If your organization would want this service, please call Jim Shilling at 574-772-4311.



THANKS

Thanks again to our neighbors, the Winebrenners. Even though we haven't had any major snow this winter, Jim is always ready to help shovel the walk at the museum.

Thanks also to Doug Sloan for taking care of the lawn maintenance this past season. In addition, he planted the beautiful flowers on the museum's front porch this summer.

Thanks to Hensler Nursery for providing the Christmas Memory Tree.

Barn Again



The Barn Again project was successfully completed. Hundreds of people viewed the Smithsonian Barn Exhibit at the Schricker Library in Knox. Thanks to all of the

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volunteers from the Extension Office and Tourism Office, we have photographed

almost all of the barns, out-houses, windmills, and corncribs in the county. Thanks also to the Calico Quilt Club for their displays of Barn quilts and to the school children for their beautiful drawings of barns that were displayed at the libraries in the county. Some of those barns have been buried, torn down or have fallen down since we captured them on film. If you would like to see these photographs, they are in display books at the museum. They have also been scanned, and can be viewed from CDs on the computer.

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Board members: James Shilling, Wayne Emigh,

James Hardesty, Melba Shilling, Marvin Allen, Doris Norman, Denise Shearin, Clarabelle Troike, Ruby Torok, Mary Stiegel, Alice Dolezal, Helen McCarty, Jane Clemons, Eli Roscka, Ed Hasnerl, Alan Selge, and Peg Brettin.



The museum has a post card of Perry Rodgers with his horse and R.D. No 1 mail wagon. It is a very

clear photo taken by Klopot Studio in 1912. The Society's Board authorized a large version of this card to be displayed on permanent loan to the new Knox Post Office. Here Peggy DeVries, Knox Postmaster, accepts the framed photograph from Jim Shilling, president of the Starke County Historical Society.



This year's Christmas exhibit in the museum featured Dr. Allen Bourff's Coca Cola Santa Claus collection. Each December Coca Cola displayed a Santa Claus ad on the back of the National Geographic Magazine from 1934 to 1965. Dr. Bourff has collected each of these ads and has arranged them in a colorful display that he loaned to the

museum during the Christmas Holidays. Many of these Santas in the later years were painted by Jack Wittrup, whose parents lived at Bass Lake. Portraits painted by Jack were also on display with the Santas. Thank you, Dr. Bourff, for sharing your wonderful exhibit.

Museum Web site:

http://www.in-map.net/counties/STARKE/government/historical_society.htm

Memory Tree



Each Year a Memory Tree is placed by the front steps of the Starke County Museum at 401 S.

Main, Knox. For a donation of \$1.00, a ribbon is placed on the tree with a nametag in memory of a loved one.



The Starke County Historical Society's purpose is to foster an interest in local history and to preserve historical items of Starke County. If you have photographs or other items of local historical interest which you would like to donate to the museum, please stop in.

This Christmas as season, almost 100 ribbons were placed on the

tree.

Membership



Each year our membership is growing. Last year our membership grew to more than 400 members in the Starke County Historical Society. If you haven't joined for 2003, it isn't too late to send a membership form and check to the Starke County Historical Society, 401 S. Main, Knox Indiana 46534.

Lew Wallace, the author of Ben Hur, state senator, Hoosier General during the Civil War, and Governor of New Mexico, spent much of his time at Bass Lake and English Lake while writing his books.



Think summer!

In this photo taken at the old time Ice Cream Social last July, Marvin Schuster pours corn into his antique corn grinder. Ray and Roseltha Hallawry also had farm engines on display while Tom Royce provided music on his accordion. Mark July 6, 2003, on your calendar for this year's Ice Cream Social and Open House at the museum. If you would like to display your historical collections, call the museum, 574-772-5393.

Lavelle Hanson recently retired from our board of directors and has been replaced

by Jane Clemons· Thanks,
Lavelle for all your years of
dedicated service given to the
Historical Society·

RAILROADS

From the North Judson Centennial Book:

For several years North Judson was a division point on the Erie Railroad, for a local passenger train to Chicago and local freight trains operating from here to Chicago and to Huntington, Indiana. A switch engine and crew were stationed here by the three railroads to transfer freight cars between the several railroads.

For a period of time there were 21 telegraph operators employed in the stations, interlocking and yard towers. There were eight track maintenance or

section crews of from five to eight men each, making fifty or more men employed in that one branch of the service. With train dispatchers, car repairmen, inspectors, tower lever men, train crews, detectives, the four agents with a staff of clerks working three shifts each, coal dock and water tank employees, one might safely say the railroads employed fully 75 percent of the labor forces of our town during that period.



North Judson has always been an ethnically diverse community - this photo shows Sramek's Grocery at the corner of Land and Adair in the early 20th century. While a look at a phone book for most small towns in Indiana will turn up mostly German and English names, here in North Judson those will be joined by Polish, Bohemian, Romanian, Latino, Japanese and Scots-Irish. Today these traditions continue to enrich the community's social and business life - try a homemade brat at Ray Wajda's store, or a fresh pastry at Fingerhut's Bakery!

Genealogical Society Book Sale
June 20-21
Knox Mall

Starke County Historical Society, Inc.
401 South Main Street
Knox, Indiana 46534



1903-----Aviation-----2003