Starke County Historical Society

THE PRIDE OF STARKE COUNTY

WINTER 2004 Newsletter



Jim Shilling,
President of the
Starke County
Historical Society
accepts a replica of
the Kolarik
Mastodon's upper
right leg bone
from Ron Richards
at the Society's
annual meeting in

November. Ron Richards is the head curator for the Indiana State Museum in Indianapolis.

The mastodon was found on Mr. & Mrs. Andrew Kolarik's farm in 1980 as they were digging a pond. The Kolariks donated the remains to the Indiana State Museum. Shortly after that, the State Museum presented the Starke County Historical Society with a fiberglass replica of one of the tusks of the animal. Both the leg bone and the tusk are displayed in the Starke County Historical Museum.



William & Gloria Sanders, now owners of the farm, had taken movies of the State Museum workers

uncovering the remains of the mastodon. Along with these movies and other slides, Mr. Richards made an excellent power-point presentation of the excavation of the mastodon to those in attendance at the annual meeting.

Photo Indexing Project

Thanks to Ann Shearin and Marvin Allen, the



photograph-indexing project is moving along at a fast pace. This photo of the Brems Elevator taken in the 1920s is just one of 16,000 photographs which have been

scanned and digitized during the last two years. Over the years, many of the photographs in the museum have started to fade and deteriorate. Some have faded so much that many details are missing in the photograph. This is a natural condition when photographs are left in the open to the sun and atmosphere. Most of the photographs in the museum have now been scanned and copied. The copies have been placed on display and the original photographs or negatives have been stored in archival containers keep them from further deterioration.

Manv of the scanned photographs are from individuals' collections. If you have family photos that you could share with us, schedule an appointment with Marvin Allen (574-772-5936) to have them scanned and copied at the museum. The photos may be of family members, farm scenes, or businesses from the past. Example: Ben Ingram has shared with us the Corbitt photo Mary Margaret collection Corbitt's father was a dentist in Dr. Corbitt had North Judson. taken hundreds of 4x5 glass negatives in the early 1900s. Many show family members, homes and North Judson scenes, as well as his dentist office in North Judson. Photographs are one of best ways for future generations to understand the past.

Museum/Library photo site: www.scpl.lib.in.us/historical/scpl.htm

Video Production Myers

During the past year, Marvin Allen and Jim Shilling have been putting history on tape. They have interviewed people in the county about their history as well as the history of the county. Old photographs that pertain to the story are then inter-woven into the video. The first video interview was with the late Frances Myers. In three tapes, she tells about her

family history, her diverse teaching experience at the Ober, Center, and Knox Schools, and her memories of growing up in



She was a fascinating Knox. storyteller. One of her videos tells about the fire at Center School and how she had smelled smoke for a time before the alarm sounded. She told the custodian that she could smell something burning, but he could not find anything. After about an hour, the fire alarm sounded and everyone was forced to go outside on a zerodegree day in January. These videos are available at museum.

Cantata

History doesn't always have to be 100 years old ---- something that happened just yesterday is now history. Marvin and Jim were asked to video the Community Cantata performance of "A Midnight Clear" directed by Jim Oliverius. It was held at the Knox United Methodist Church on December 14, 2003, with over 500

people enjoying the hour-long cantata. Its fifty-member choir was assembled from 13 Starke County community churches. Harold Welter and Rev. Leon Pomeroy were narrators.

Pettinato

An interview was conducted with Dick Pettinato, standing beside his father's 1937 Allis Chalmers threshing machine, which was made in LaPorte, Indiana.



The machine is in excellent shape and Dick explains the workings of the thresher and what it was like growing up on their Starke County farm in the 1930s and 40s.

Veterans

The museum has received copies (courtesy of the Wayne Township Librarian, Jane Ellen Felchuk), of the video interviews conducted by Steve Lee of North Judson. Steve interviewed several of the Starke County war veterans and recorded their stories and experiences. He said he was impressed by the courage and patriotism demonstrated by the different stories that the veterans told. The interviews were part of a nationwide effort to record the stories of veterans across the United States. This program was funded by the Library of Congress and the Lilly Endowment and was encouraged in Indiana by Senator Richard Lugar.



Several other videos are being processed and will be completed in the near future.



Who Pulled the Plug on English Lake?

This is the title of a new book by Bob Stachura. It is not only a book about the drainage of the English Lake area, but also a journal about the life of the Starke County and the English Lake people from the mid 1800s to the 1950s. It is $8 \frac{1}{2} \times 11$ inches and 433 pages and is full of information from old newspapers and letters. He has included articles about the history of the English Lake gun club and the local school. There are articles about the KKK, the Starke County Horse Thief Detective Association, and prohibition. He tells about the early history of the Kankakee area, Lena Park and the glass factory, the railroad activity, and the depression. The stories about the Frog Man, Indian Mary, Pete Laylow, and Governor Manson make an interesting book that is hard to put down once you start reading it.

Lena Park, Starke County, Indiana

In addition to the three pages devoted to Lena Park in Bob Stachura's book on English Lake, a good article about Lena Park can be found on the web site created by Marty Lucas. At the turn of the 20th century, real estate speculators subdivided hundreds of acres southeast of North Judson and built a train station. They aggressively marketed their development to recent immigrants in Chicago. selling thousands of tiny lots. They claimed to be building a new industrial center that would use the abundant sand in Starke County to make glass and bricks. What happened to Lena Park? - Look up the Lena Park history on Marty's web site.....

http://www.lenapark.net/history.html



The Ice Cream Social

was a big

success last year. In addition to all the board members who helped, the extra effort by Dewey Roseltha Anderson, Ray & Hallowry. Marvin & Marge Schuster, and Tom Royce was appreciated. They showed off their talents and machinery on the lawn of the museum while many stayed cool inside looking at the new exhibits and videos. Maybe you have an antique tractor, a doll collection or arrowhead collection, or perhaps a talent with an old type of musical instrument, which you are willing to share. We would love to have you, also, at next year's old time Ice Cream Social.

Bus Trip

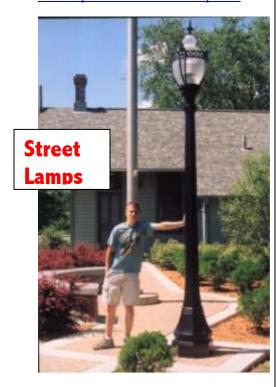


The bus trip on April 24th to the new Indiana State Museum was a great experience for 46 Starke County people. We were "at the crossroads of everything interesting, educational and unique about Indiana". We had a table reserved for us at the recreated L.S. Ayres Tea Room. We saw Lewis & Clark: Great Journey West on the giant six story high screen in the IMAX Theater. We walked around the outside of the museum and saw the 92 different county icons. We saw the Starke County Kalarik mastodon as well as the Gumz (LaPorte Co.) mastodon and many, many other beautifully displayed exhibits.



Slide Show

Almost 200 people in North Judson viewed a showing of some of the historic photographs that have been scanned during the last two years by the Historical Society. Jane Clemons and Marvin Allen projected the photographs on a wide screen in the meeting room of the Wayne Township Public Library on April 8, 2003. The public had never seen many of the photographs before and a lively conversation devolved as the enthusiastic audience identified many of the places in the photographs. If you want to see photographs like these and help us identify them, please go to our museumweb library site www.scpl.lib.in.us/historical/scpl.htm



One of the plans for restoration of the old Knox Depot was to refurbish some of the old Knox street lamps that were used in Knox during the 1920 – 1950 era, and place them near the parking areas by the depot. Three families donated parts of the old street lamps: James & Eleanor Hamblin, Robert & Betty Blessing, and Paul & Barbara Boender. David Smith, Boy Scout, Troop 13, refurbished the lampposts and organized the installation of the four lamps in the area around the depot for his Eagle Scout Award. His dedication and hard work are much appreciated .

Our Purpose

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.



Marilyn McCarty at Governor Schricker's piano, along with Ed Hasnerl, led the guests in singing carols during Christmas Museum's Christmas Open House on November 30, 2003. participants during the afternoon Anderson. were Bing Habo Runkle, Dixie Lockridge, Sarah Gates, Anita Goodan, Bruce & Sandy Bennett, Ron & Regina Simoni, and Delores Smith. The guests enjoyed the lively singing, the new exhibits in the museum and the hot cider and home-made Christmas cookies that the board members had made.



The Museum's Vin Fiz Exhibit was on display at the Starke County Public Library during November & December celebrating the 100th anniversary of the beginning of flight. The Vin Fiz was the first airplane to fly across the United States from coast to coast. One of its many landings was in Starke County. If you missed the exhibit at the Library, stop by the museum to view it.



"Starke Reality" Business & Community Service Expo, May 13, 2003, at the Knox Community Center provided an opportunity for Melba Shilling, County Historian, to show off Che Mah and other museum items in a special exhibit. Pictured here is Melba with the 28-inch manikin of Che Mah (1838-1926) and his lounge chair. He retired to Starke County after traveling with Barnum and Bailey Circus for many years. A computer slide show of historic Starke County photos was also a part of the exhibit.

Bass Lake Directory

A reprint of the 1925 Bass Lake Directory is now available at the museum. This directory shows many of the photos and businesses at Bass Lake in the 1920s. It also has a center fold map of northwest Indiana and the roads leading to Bass Lake – State Routes 15, 2, 14, etc. going through Starke County.

Help

Our membership is steadily growing each year. Last year our membership was over 400 people. This year we are fast approaching the 400 mark. Your dues and contributions are extremely important for the Museum. Checks may be sent to the Starke County Historical Society, Inc, 401 South Main. Indiana 46534 Knox.



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. He has also been taking care of much of the lawn maintenance this past season.

Thanks also to Jim Hardesty for lawn and shrub maintenance this summer.

 $\it Thanks$ to Hensler Nursery for providing the Christmas Memory Tree.

We appreciate all of the volunteer efforts. If you would like to help around the museum, please call Jim Shilling at 772-43II.

MUSEUM WEB SITE:

http://www.inmap.net/counties/STARKE/government /historical_society.htm

Board members: James Shilling, Wayne Emigh, James Hardesty, Melba Shilling, Marvin Allen, Lois Varro, Doris Norman, Denise Shearin, Clarabelle Troike, Ruby Torok, Mary Stiegal, Alice Dolezal, Helen McCarty, Jane Clemons, Eli Roscka, Ed Hasnerl, Alan Selge, and Peg Brettin.

MUSEUM HOURS

Tuesday thru Friday 12 to 4 pm (when volunteers are available)

STARKE COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY, INC. 401 SOUTH MAIN KNOX IN 46534 574-772-5393

Genealogical Society Book Sale June 25-26

Joseph Norman McCormick

For those of you who like the tales of our Starke County pioneers and how they came to Starke County, read about Mr. McCormick's journey to Starke County.

"Among the earliest recollections of Mr. McCormick are the removal of his family from old Virginia and its establishment as pioneers in the woods of Starke County. He has known this county three score years, and his knowledge of its physical condition and its people is of particular definiteness because of his long service as civil engineer and surveyor, and probably no other citizen has a more intimate and longer acquaintance with the county in its making and progress than Joseph N. McCormick.

In 1852, young Joseph with his parents, two brothers, and a sister moved from Virginia to the

West. A team of horses and wagon carried all their earthly possessions overland, and they camped out while on the way, being fifty-four nights and fifty-five days en route. The family arrived at a place called Twelve Miles, being that distance from Logansport in Cass County, Indiana. There they remained until the fall of 1853, and then came into Starke County. Starke County was at that time divided between the high sandy ridges and the low swamps, and the easiest method of entering the county was to follow the high ground on the ridges, and in that way the McCormick family came into this section. They finally preempted forty acres in section 6 of Washington Township, three and a half miles northeast of Knox, which at that time was a hamlet comprising only a few houses, and the village had been laid out only two years previously. On the forty acres the family established a home in a log cabin, built in the midst of the woods, and there the father and the children employed themselves improving the land and subsequently in adding a frame addition to the log cabin."

From 1915 Starke County History

Thank you, Kankakee Valley REMC



and Steve VanderWerf for helping with the printing of our Newsletter.

An endowment fund has been established for the Starke County Historical Society through the Starke County Community Foundation. Anyone wishing to contribute to this fund may call 574-772-3665 for more information.