

JASPER COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY NEWSLETTER

WELCOME HISTORY BUFFS

This issue will include information from some of the collections we have received in the last year. Several of the articles reprinted in this first newsletter for 2016 were printed 120 years ago in the People's Pilot published January 2, 1896. The newspaper was included in a collection of Hugh Tom Kirk materials provided to the museum by Karen Marr. The newspaper includes photos of people, homes, churches, and businesses existing in 1896. Also included are many biographies of local businessmen with familiar names like Randle, Mills, Willis, Parkison, Osborn, Ferguson, Washburn, Thompson, Kahler, Nowels, Robinson, Healy, Paxton, and McCoy. Over the next year, we plan to include a couple of these biographies or articles about the businesses run by these people in each 2016 issue.

We will also be highlighting Donna Strole's article about The Rover that was provided by Rose Nesius. Unfortunately we do not have space to show everything that has been contributed, but we do want to emphasize how much we appreciate each and every contribution to our collections.

MEDARYVILLE HISTORY DONATED

Janice Chupp donated a copy of a publication from the Medaryville sesquicentennial which includes many family histories of residents of Medaryville with close ties to Jasper County families. This is a great addition to our genealogical collection.

MILLSTONE DONATED

Wm. O. Henry has donated a millstone from the Prichard, Nowels, Alter mill that

was located on the Iroquois River at the northwest corner of the intersection of the Iroquois with CR700W in the yard of the Amos Alter house. Bill noted that he believed the mill was an undershot mill. The stone had been moved to Bill Henry's home on SR 14.

Isaac Vanausdal Alter, Bill's great-great grandfather, purchased the mill from Nowels around 1864. It was operated until the mill dam was blown up in the 1870's or 80's. Darrell Dunlap and Ray Schultz from the Retired Iron Club moved the wheel to storage until it can be reconstructed and hopefully set up at the fairgrounds. Mr. Henry also donated \$300 to be used towards costs associated with the mill or towards the Helenor project. We plan to purchase a plaque explaining the history of the mill when our research is completed.

REMC REMOVES TREE

Tom Moore and his crew from REMC deserve a big thank you for removing a dead tree from the Sandridge Cemetery. The tree was located right in front of the Rev. Helenor Davisson tombstone and was removed to avoid damage to the newly restored tombstones.

THE ROVER'S TOMBSTONE AT WELSH CEMETERY



John Hall – "The Rover"

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This article was written by Donna Strole and published in *The Farmer's Daughter* March 4, 1996. It was provided to the JCHS by Rose Nesius. The local Gertrude Stein mentioned in the article is "Aunt Gertie" to Rose Nesius.

When the weather becomes warmer in the spring many things appear – flowers, birds of many kinds, newborn farm animals and many of us can remember peculiar types of people. Gertrude Stein recalls one such person – John Hall, who lies at rest in the Welsh Cemetery on Egypt Road in Jordan Township.

At the age of 92, Gertrude has many memories to share but with coming of spring John Hall lingers vividly in her mind.

John Hall came down from Canada in the middle 1800's, likely by foot, Gertrude said. She explained to me that he came with a group of people but somehow got lost and drifted into Carpenter Township, Jordan Township and Goodland area.

Now John would appear at her parents, John and Barbara Kelly, in the spring to help them with plowing or whatever chores needed to be done on the farm near Goodland. When her parents moved to Carpenter Twp., John found their home and when Gertrude got married and lived in Jordan Twp., John found her again. Now, you see Ole' John soon learned what families welcome him into their home like the Kellys, Porters, Fenwicks and a few others.

John may have been small in stature, lacked education, and, maybe, even somewhat retarded but somehow fascinated the children in the Kelly family. When someone would yell, "Here comes

Ole' John", Gertrude recalled that they would all sort of line up and would wait for him.

Like most tramps in those days, John wore many layers of clothing – shirts, overalls, vest, cap, coat and usually knee-high leather boots. Sometimes he would wrap these up and tie with twine to carry like other tramps did on a stick. Once in a while, on a sunny day, Gertrude remembers seeing his clothes hanging from a willow over Carpenter's Creek to dry.

Now, John was fairly content with the pay of a silver dollar or a 50-cent piece. When he received such pay, Gertrude said, John acted like he was in "Hog Heaven". People in those days didn't have a great deal of money and had large families to support. Some families only gave him chewing tobacco and his keep.

Gertrude remembers how John would enjoy sitting at their table and eating with the Kelly family. She said that John would usually wash his hands and face before he ate his meals. Also, he would bow his head when the family said grace. As he passed by the gate post, John would take his "chaw of tobacker" out of his mouth and leave it on top of the gate post until he came out of the house again after the meal. Yes, he'd put the "tobacker" back in his mouth and continue chewing it.

John Hall spent his last few years at the Jasper Co. "Poor Farm" just west of Rensselaer. Gertrude said that John found it hard to be "fenced in" after being used to an outdoor life. Also he had a difficult time getting used to the "modern ways" such as the indoor toilet with a pull chain.

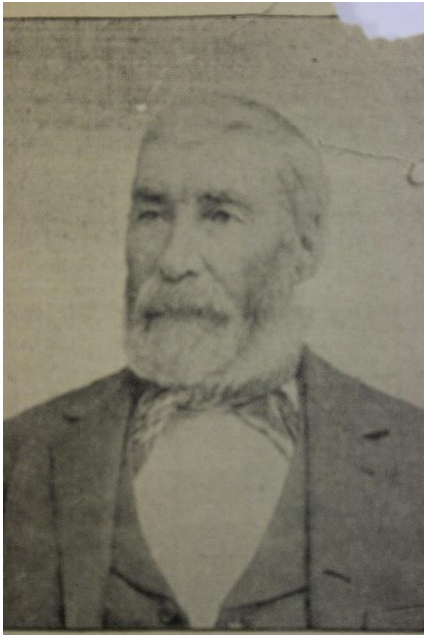
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Now, Ole' John may have never done anything spectacular but he definitely did leave his "mark" on the area enough that his "family" did provide a gravestone marker for his final resting place.

COMMERCIAL STATE BANK

The *People's Pilot* included bios of the President and Vice President of the bank—Addison Parkison and James T. Randle. Also included was a photo of Vice President Capt. John M. Wasson but the bio was not included in the section of the paper we have.

ADDISON PARKISON



The president of the Commercial State Bank is a descendant of one of the early settlers of Jasper County, his father being John G. Parkison, a pioneer of 1837. He is the third child in a family of twelve. His mother was Matilda, daughter of Simon Kenton, the celebrated Indiana fighter.

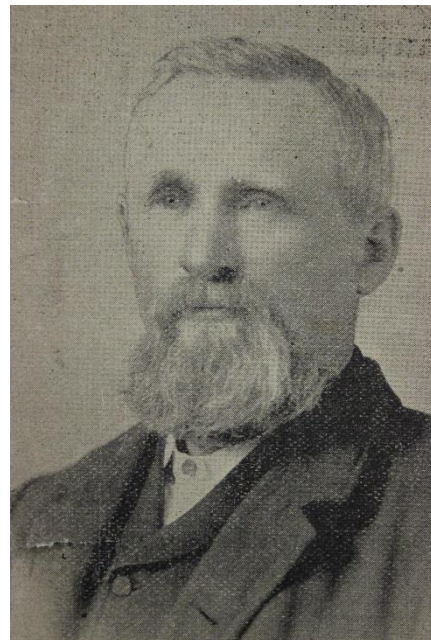
Mr. Parkison is a most enterprising and public spirited citizen, has acquired a handsome competence through

conservative ventures, and the exercise of foresight in business matters, and his advice in transactions of importance is often sought by those friends who esteem his superior judgement. He was raised a farmer and was for years very successful in that calling and he still owns an excellent farm. . .

He served on the Drainage Commission with a meritorious record, and has for many years been an honored citizen whose integrity was above question. He is one of the largest holders of stock in the Commercial State Bank.

Addison Parkison was born May 22, 1822 at Jamesfield, Logan county, Ohio; married Barbara A. Kenton May 5, 1850, and they have three children living, Mrs. Julia Moore, Mrs. Martha J. Willey, and Miss Stella A.

JAMES T RANDLE



No citizen of Jasper county has greater reason to be satisfied with a well spent life. He has for many years been retired from active management of his fine farm in

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Barkley township, and resides in Rensselaer in a beautiful home. . His association with this institution, the Commercial State bank, adds much to its standing in the minds of the people. He has been a very successful business man and is one of the solid financiers of Jasper county. He served on the Drainage Commission for three years with credit to himself and great benefit to the people. He is prominent in the advocacy of all improvements; and liberal of his support of every worthy enterprise. He is a member and generous contributor to the Methodist Episcopal Church.

Mr. Randle is a native of Hampshire county, West Virginia, and was born in 1831. His parents, Thomas and Nancy (Culp) Randle, came to Jasper county with the very earliest pioneers. James was the eldest of eleven children.

James T. Randle married Mrs. Ruth A. Harris, by which union they have five children, Robert, Thomas, John, Emeline, and Edward.

PEOPLE'S PILOT ARTICLE ADDS INFORMATION ABOUT THE FREE WILL BAPTIST CHURCH WHICH NOW HOUSES OUR MUSEUM BUILDING

The Primitive Baptist Church of Rensselaer, Ind., was constituted May 20, 1877, with a membership of only seven. Elders Samuel H. Benjamin of Warsaw, Ind., William Jackson of Atwood, and Edward J. Taylor of Wabash county, Indiana, assisting at its constitution. Elder William Jackson was chosen as its first pastor and served acceptably for four years. During his ministry the membership increased to

twenty-three. On account of his age and the distance from his home, he declined to serve the church longer, and Elder W. R. Nowels, who was ordained to the ministry May 14, 1881, was called to the pastoral care of the church. Elder Nowels has served the church continuously in this capacity ever since. The former meeting place, five miles distant north-west of Rensselaer, was abandoned in 1889 and arrangements made for holding the meetings, first in the Missionary Baptist Church house in this place, where meetings were held for two years, and afterwards in the Free Will Baptist house, where meetings were held for about a year longer. In 1892 the church erected the comfortable house it now occupies at a cost of \$2,200. Its membership is now about forty, and though weak in numbers, it is steadfast in its peculiar faith and moves on in its quaint and quiet way to perform its mission in the world.

PHOTO OF PRIMITIVE BAPTIST CHURCH FROM PEOPLE'S PILOT.



MUSEUM HOURS

The museum is open the first and third Saturdays of each month from 10 to 1.

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DAR DEDICATING PLAQUE

Above photo includes Regent Margaret Babcock Paulus and her daughters Janie and Sally

The JCHS was presented a scrapbook compiled by Margaret B. Paulus titled **THROUGH THE YEARS WITH GENERAL VAN RENSSELAER CHAPTER DAUGHTERS OF THE AMERICAN REVOLUTION**. Photos include the dedication of a tablet marking the site of the first log cabin in Rensselaer (see photo above), the celebration of the chapter's 75th year in 1971, the dedication of the General Milroy plaque, and the laying of a memorial marker honoring our county's Revolutionary War soldier George Moore.

Thanks to Virginia Salyer for photographing the book. We are in the process of trying to identify the women shown in the photos.

Identifying photos is an on-going process in many of our collections. Janett Kingman has been going through the Delores and Neal Bott collection to identify people.

This is a reminder to all of us to properly mark with pencil the names of people

included in our own family photograph collections.

FLOYD LEGLER GIVES PRESENTATION



Floyd Legler gave an excellent presentation on the history of the Remington Chautauqua at our October meeting. The photo shows Jeanette Nagel, who attended school in Remington, discussing the subject with Floyd after the meeting.

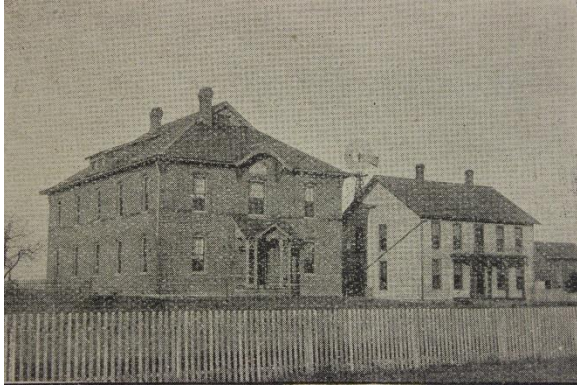
DUES FOR 2016 ARE DUE NOW

The dues for 2016 are \$15 for an individual and \$25 for a couple, \$100 for a business membership. Lifetime memberships have been raised to \$150. The increases are necessary in order to maintain a sound financial footing and are still way lower than memberships in most museums. Please consider adding an extra donation when mailing your dues.

CONTACT US

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**PHOTO OF JASPER COUNTY POOR FARM
FROM THE PEOPLE'S PILOT JANUARY 2,
1896**

**SEE OTHER PHOTOS FROM THIS ISSUE
INSIDE OUR NEWSLETTER**