The Newcomer

A publication of the Newton County Historical Society, Inc. Published 4 times a year, Spring, Summer, Fall and Winter.

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150 Years of Farming

By Vic Carlson

Morocco was founded 150 years ago in 1851 and I have lived one half of this period having been born in 1924 and farmed here all of my life.

I have seen tremendous changes and there were of course, important farming practices developed after Newton County was settled and Morocco was established.

The Morocco area attracted many early settlers because of the Beaver Timber. Timber was essential for house, shelter for livestock and fuel for heating the dwelling. Almost all of the land to the south of Morocco was covered by prairie grass. It was usually broken up with a plow pulled by several head of oxen. It is interesting to note that the first attempts to drain the area was accomplished with a large plow pulled by several teams of oxen hitched in tandem.

As the settlers became established and prosperous, agricultural changes came rapidly. Draft horses and mules provided the motive power on the farm and were the only means of transportation until the railroads came to this area later. Most of the crops raised in the period were consumed locally, but some were hauled by team and wagon to Kankakee, Illinois, Chicago, Illinois and Lafayette, Indiana.

The early farms were small but diversified with livestock of all kinds. The farmer was very self-sufficient and raised almost all of his families needs, as well as feed a few families in town.

With society membership you may also join the FAMILY HISTORY DIVISION Newton County Historical Society, Inc.

Dues (Check One) Yearly (July 1 - June 3)

Student ($2) ___ Individual ($6)

Family Life ($17) ___ Institutional ($25) ___ Contributing ($50.00)

Membership you may also join the

FAMILY HISTORY DIVISION Newton County Historical Society, Inc.

Dues (Check One) Yearly (July 1 - June 3)

Student ($1) ___ Individual ($3)

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As a member, you automatically receive a copy of our quarterly newsletter, THE NEWCOMER free!

The Newton County Historical Society meets every fourth Monday of each month, on the same day, the Family History Division meets at 3:00 at the Resource Center at 224 N. Third Street in Kentland and the Society general meetings are held in different locations in the County at 7:00 p.m. All members are notified of the place and time each month. Don’t Forget - Memberships Make Great Gifts!!

We’d Like Your Input!! We are looking for suggestions for stories, articles and pictures for our next edition of The Newcomer. We know that there are many stories of our past ancestors and their way of life that are just waiting to be told! This newsletter is designed to do just that! If you would like to write an article, submit a photo, contact the editor or a member of our society.

Visit our web site at www.rootsweb.com/~innewton
The President’s Corner

By Yvonne Kay

Spring is trying to happen in Newton County and already has made its appearance in the fruit trees. I have been enjoying the daffodils. It has been a long winter, and everyone is ready for some sunshine. The week has been filled with a lot of paper work between the applications for the Federal and State not-for-profit status for the Newton County Historical Society and its retail Mercantile Certificate. I still have numbers running around in my head. I can report that we now have received approval for each of several grants that removes any barrier to accept title to the Scott-Lucas house and the funds from the sale of Anna's personal property. We also can now sell items at a Museum Shop, should we open one. Anna's estate has not been finally settled, but we look forward to it being closed soon, as there are committees ready to start work on their projects.

I have been helping my daughter, Joye, prepare family history for the upcoming Sesquicentennial Book. It has become clear to me how important this is, especially for those who their ancestors are unless we record them now. I encourage you all to submit your family history to the Resource Center for filing, even if you are not involved in the Beaver Township book. It takes some time, but you will be pleased that you did.

The Society is still in need of volunteers. The growth of the Society has been outstanding. However, it has all been accomplished by volunteers and help and there are many jobs that still remain to be done. If you can devote a few hours even on a regular basis to help keep the Resource Center open it will be a valuable contribution. We have pretty well got the afterschool covered, but the mornings still need volunteers. Beth Bassett is in charge of the schedule and will be happy to accept your help. We are getting more and more visitors.

If you have not visited the Resource Center, please do. I think you will be impressed by what has been accomplished in such a short time. If you have not driven by the Scott-Lucas House in Morocco, please do, for I think you will be interested in this classic Arts and Crafts Bungalow, which soon will be ours.

Resource Center Library Wish List

Although the shelves in our library at the Resource Center of the Society located at 224 N. Third Street in Kentland have several books regarding local history, family histories and general information for researching, we still have many books that would help complete our collection. If you can run across an extra copy of the following books, or let us know from the listing these books, please contact us at 219-474-6944. We need these books! Thank you!

Newton County 1853-1915 by John Ade

A Standard History and Cyclopedia 2 volumes 1916.

Counties of Warren, Benton, Jasper and Newton, Indiana 1883.

Beaver Lake, A Land of Enchantment by Elmore Barce.

Any book of poetry by Will Pfrimm.

Any book by a local author.

Any book by George Ade.

The Story of Marion’s Marquis Weems - tells the story of Jasper and Newton as soldiers.

The Land of the Potawatamie by Elmore Barce.

The Land of the Miami by Elmore Barce.

The Story of Border and Border Along the Kankakee by Burt E. Burroughs.

Memoirs William H. Hershman.

A History of your own Newton County by Joseph Fletcher. We have a photo copy.

Biographical History of Tippecanoe. Plus other counties.


Any family histories that have been published could we have yours?

Newton County High School Yearbooks any year.

Do you have an old family Bible? Never destroy these! We would be happy to have them or we would be happy to copy the written family information from them for our files. Books may be given as a memorial or in honor of someone.

Our INGENWEB Web Site Wins The Purple Floppy Award!

With the addition of our cemeteries records, actual pdf files of our newsletter, a link to a quality cemetery and township map, and information from the general records, our web site has received many positive comments from visitors and researchers. Doing this has increased the traffic to our site, as well as lessened the burden of research to our volunteers.

We are in the midst of publishing The Morocco Sesquicentennial Book, and the web site has provided a way for “out of towners” to contribute their family histories. Biographies and Obituaries downloaded to the site by visitors have also added valuable material for the book.

I was recently informed that our site had been awarded “The Purple Floppy Award,” which is given internally by the INGENWEB Project. We were ranked eighth in the state, with the award given to the top ten sites. Without the contributions of our members, and the help of our webmaster, Fred Finkelman, who worked with Bob Williamson at the onset of the site, this information would still be on file at the center, and not available on-line to be accessed by the world. Good job everyone! Submitted by Beth Bassett, Web Site Co-ordinator.

Do You Know Your County of Newton?

By Janet Miller

1. In the early years, people of Newton County referred to Kentland with a nickname. What was it?

2. What was once a noted and first benevolent society formed in Newton County?

3. An early landmark of Newton County was Timmons Ford. Where was it located?

4. In 1866 and 1887, there were two fairs held in Newton County. Name them and their locations.

5. A J. K. Kent, the founder of Kentland, was also a large land owner. He died in May, 1882, owning approximately how many acres in Newton County?

6. Sir Thomas Ross, the big cat known to all of town, with malicious intent and malice aforethought, commenced cleaning houses this week. Knowing how contagious the housecleaning fever is a person so malevolent as to start its spread this early in the spring should be quarantined for at least thirty days.

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By Beth Bassett

In the 1920's, Major William Augustus Rafferty arrived in Colfax township and purchased large tracts of land in Sections 17, 19, 20 and 29. At this time, Major Rafferty and George Hills farmed together owning in partnership ground in sections 17, 18, 20 and 1/2 of 29. Later, they divided this and farmed individually.

Major Rafferty was born on March 6, 1892 at Ft. Wingate, New Mexico. He was the son of Colonel William A. and Rosetta (Ezekia) Rafferty. He spent his entire youth at various Army headquarters where his father was stationed. He entered West Point Military Academy on March 6, 1909 and graduated in the class of 1913 in time to see action in the Vera Cruz incident with Mexico and later on the border where Pancho Villa became overenthusiastic. He was on the staff of Gen. John J. Pershing in World War I, in France, as a coordinator of supply in the General Staff Corps, First Army, A.E.F. He was awarded the Distinguished Service Medal and the Belgian Order of the Cross. He retired from service at Washington, D.C. on December 31, 1922, as a Major.

The Major met Miss Virginia Insull at Highland Park, Illinois and they were married on April 27, 1927. Virginia, the only daughter of Martin and Virginia (Van Vliet) Insull was born in Evanston, Illinois on December 22, 1896. From Chicago the family moved to Massachusetts, back to New Albany, Indiana. Unfortunately, past information does not reveal much about her life prior to marrying Major Rafferty, but her obituary states that she was a member of the Trinity Episcopal Church of Highland Park, Illinois; Morrocco American Legion Auxiliary and the American Angus Association Auxiliary.

By 1928 the home was built in a sandy knoll, which was part of an island in Beaver Lake. This home would become headquarters for a 2,035 acre establishment with an impressive output of beef, pork, and purebred Aberdeen Angus cattle, as well as grain crops such as corn, wheat, oats and hay.

A copy of an article given to me by my sister, Shirley Miller, wife of Devon Miller, son of Mount Miller, one of the general foremen at Green Acre Farms, reveals much of the day to day activity of the farm. Unfortunately, the introduction and ending of the article have been lost with time, which contained information regarding Mr. and Mrs. Rafferty's lives. However, we were able to reproduce a picture of the lovely home they established.

Many Green Acre calves have been sold over $1,000, and the top was $1,500, for a heifer that was a champion at Denver, but those are the exceptions, not the rule. ... not only of the home farm but the surrounding farms of the area. Increased farm productivity, that's always the main goal.

Each year. Around 80 bull calves are castrated. The Major is not sentimental in the use of the knife. It is used all too sparingly by most breeders, he believes. Steers are sold as club calves or fed for the commercial market.

"You like to sell a lot around the top once in a while," he explains. "There's always a market, evidence that the Major's preaching and example have borne fruit. The Major likes to see the youngsters appreciate good cattle."

In fact, both the Major and Mrs. Rafferty were responsible for many young members of the farming community's involvement in the local 4-H programs. They contributed help and encouragement to many members, furnishing calves, pigs and money to help them get started. They taught the children to grow and show their livestock. The Major served on the County 4-H Committee and furnished money for ribbons and awards as well.

"But the Angus herd, big as it is and important as it is to the general scheme of things at Green Acres, is only a part of the picture. From 300 to 350 feeder calves are purchased at the Chicago market and fed out at the farm along with the home bred Angus."

"There was a time when thoroughbred horses were an important part of the livestock picture. This was another case of the Rafferty family team which led to a thriving sideline. Mrs. Rafferty had been a horsewoman since girlhood. The Major, too, knew good horseflesh when he saw it. His father was a horseman and her grandfather was in the same line.

A couple of years later, members of the American Legion in Newton County reportedly objected to flying of an American flag from a flagstaff on the monument.

The death of the prize bull seemed to mark a turning point in McCray's financial fortunes. It was four years later when he was convicted of mail fraud by a federal jury at Indianapolis while he was serving as Indiana's 29th governor.

A year before his federal indictment, McCray escaped imprisonment when a state court jury failed to reach a verdict on a charge that he had embezzled $155,000 from the Indiana Agricultural Board. That year the state was rife with rumor that the governor, once said to be worth $3 million was bankrupt.

Governor Warren T. McCray

Warren T. McCray was born in 1865 near Brook, and after a common school education in Kentland, became a bookkeeper in the Discount and Deposit Bank of Kentland. He later became president and owner of the bank.

McCray was highly regarded in farm circles and served as president of the National Grain Dealers Association. His political aspirations surfaced in 1916 when he became a candidate for Republican nomination as governor. He lost the nomination to James P. Goodrich, but in 1920 won the nomination and election. Although his personal financial life was filled with scandal and fraud, McCray apparently separated his official duties from his personal life. He ran the state efficiently and pushed through important legislation. Whether you like it or not, you can thank Gov. McCray for the tax on gasoline that is used for state and county highway construction. The gasoline tax measure was a pet project upon which he had based much of his campaign.

Eighty seven public buildings were constructed during his administration, including many of those still in use at the State Fairgrounds. McCray sponsored 13 amendments to the Indiana Constitution, but only one was adopted the one incorporating women's suffrage. McCray also pushed an improved teacher's pension law through the Legislature after he made a number of unannounced visits to rural schools to investigate educational problems.

It was the old role as a "wheeler dealer" cattle baron that got McCray into trouble. During his sensational trial on charges of using the mails to defraud, the federal prosecutor paraded 150 witnesses to the stand, all of whom were McCray farm managers and employees and Indiana bankers.

The trial revealed that McCray had forged the names of many of his farm managers and partners to papers for loans he had allegedly made to them so they could purchase herds of cattle covered by notes...
Old Ivory China is a collection of delicate and beautiful porcelains produced by the Ohme Porcelain Works in the late 1800's and early 1900's. Little has been known of its origins or history, and therefore it has been shrouded in mystery. This only adds to the excitement that the Gerbracht experiences when their search for additional pieces to their collection! Barbara inherited a Chocolate Set and Cake Set that once belonged to her father and mother, who acquired it from her grandfather's sister, Emma Howard Ireland of Charleston City, Iowa. Emma had the set at about the turn of the century, and Barbara is sure that she used the ivory for entertaining. What is clear about this china is that a factory existed in Silesia, Germany, from 1882 to 1928 called the Procelain Manufactory Hermann Ohme. The factory produced two lines of porcelains. The major line was a fine china titled "Old Ivory" after its delicately matted ivory colored background. This finish and color was achieved by china painting the ivory color over the clear glazed bisque and then firing. The second series was a line of hotel ware utilizing the same porcelain pieces but finished in clear glaze.

The china was produced in full dinner sets with multiple accessories similar to Haviland china patterns. Blanks were even given French names as an obvious link to the highly respected French manufacturers. Some of the Old Ivory China possessed a more complete line of accessory pieces than others.

The porcelains of Old Ivory and apparently, the majority of the hotel wares were produced exclusively for export to the United States. The china was shipped in wooden barrels, often used as ballast in the cargo hold on the ships. The hearsay information provides that the barrels of china were often traded for barrels of fish upon reaching New England, and during the times of embargo of German goods, were smuggled ashore by sailors to grade for desired supplies.

Thank you Barbara, for sharing your collection with us!
The Kessler Families

By Vic Carlson

Focus on Families

There are always stories passed down within the Kessler family that are worth retelling. One of those stories that is often shared is about a wrestling match that took place in Morocco, Indiana. In those days, one form of entertainment at local gatherings was wrestling matches between traveling professional wrestlers and fighters who were pitted against the local talent available. Usually, the local yokels came out second best.

In 1853, John Luther Kessler, a devout Methodist and his grandchildren were related that every Sunday he would hitch to his carriage, gather them all and take them to the white frame church which was located west of town. The present Methodist Church stands. He apparently instilled strong religious convictions in his sons as the name Kessler portrays. John D. Kessler was a devout Methodist. He purchased the Goddard interest in the Goddard and Kessler Store and it then was known as Spradling's Store. After Bill's death in 1950, Virginia Spradling continued the business, with her son-in-law, Clay Blaney as manager.

Vic Carlson

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Focus On Families-Kessler

Robert Benjimen (Rob) Kessler

Robert Kessler, my maternal grandfather, was born in 1865 and, with the exception of a brief period when he was farmed just east of Morocco, he spent his entire life on the original Kessler homestead. He built the large frame house, where his grandson John Kessler now resides, just before World War I. Rob, as he was generally known, married Lulu Kinney and they were the parents of six children.

Carrie Ann Kessler, first child of Rob and Lou was born on a farm just east of Morocco. Carrie married William Earl Tripplett, grandson of pioneer Doctor Charles E. Tripplett, who came to Morocco from Kentucky. Earl farmed to Tripplett homeplace southwest of Morocco and also managed a grain elevator located where Wilson Farm Center is now in business. Earl and Carrie were the parents of Blanche Louise, Dorothy Ethel and Phyllis Jean Tripplett.

Estella Maie Kessler, second daughter, was born in 1890 at the Kessler home place. Maie married Albert Ray Holley and their children were Donald Ray and Charles DeWayne Holley. Charles died in 1990, lacking a few months of attaining 100 years of age.

Vivian DeWayne Kessler, eldest son of Rob and Lou, was born in 1893. Vivian was quarterback on the Morocco football team that his first cousin, Lex Kessler, played on just before World War I. Vivian married Alice Ann Victoria Carlson and they owned and operated a farm southwest of Morocco. Later in life, they lived in and owned a part of the original Kessler homestead west of Morocco. Vivian and Alice were the parents of Roberta Ann, Helen Jean and John David Kessler.

Robert B. Kessler died in 1936 and his wife, Lulu Kinney Kessler, died in 1948. They were interned in Murphey Cemetery.

Vivian’s son, John D. Kessler, died in 1920 and his wife Estella Hope Kessler died in 1945. They were buried in Oakland Cemetery.

By mud, on the South by wild ducks, and the East by frogs, and on the West by mosquitoes. The town was very wet. We had a lot of降雨, but it never never never moved. Kissings games are a lot of fun if you never heard a Jazz band. A snowball game isn’t as exciting as a basketball game, and a Church revival could hardly be classed a popular entertainment compared with--say, Bank Nights.

The point is, you never miss any kind of diversion that you never have enjoyed. Kentland was, to me the whole world and I found it a very satisfactory world because of two important highways; blazoning with lights; buzzing with new industries, and threatening to become a minor metropolis.

I am very proud of my birthplace, and I marvel at recent improvements and ambitious developments, but I still insist that we had a lot of fun away back yonder in the horse and buggy days. I am glad to join in this tribute to one of the liveliest county-seats in Northern Indiana. I thank you.

Announcer: And we thank you Mr. Ade.

Submitted By Gerald Born

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An agriculture scholarship was established in memory of Mrs. Georgia Rafferty at the North Newton High School in memory of Major Rafferty.

Morocco To Celebrate 150 Years August 24-26th

The town of Morocco will be celebrating 150 years of “growth” on August 24, 25, and 26. Committees have been meeting and members are planning events to take place on that special weekend this summer. A fun-filled celebration is being planned for your three-day visit to Morocco. Mark the days on your calendar so you won’t miss the festivities!

McCray’s Monument To a Bull - Perfection Fairfax

Livestock buyers in between begin to think the animals are actually worth that price.” Washburn said.

Washburn said McCray was an affable, cheerful man who had legions of followers and armies of detractors. He said McCray had a reputation of being slick in business “and he could give you a sob story about his financial troubles that would have you in tears”.

Washburn said he sold tons of hay to McCray during Orchard Lake Farm’s heydays, but had no problem with McCray because they operated on a cash on delivery basis.

The huge slab of concrete marks the final resting place of Perfection Fairfax, a Hereford bull nationally famed as “King of Hereford Sires” during the teens of the 20th Century. Fairfax blood flowed in the veins of Hereford cattle from coast to coast, and his international notoriety provided the old sight of turbed and sari-clad East Indians, stolling on the tree shaded streets of this bucolic community. But rivaling the stardom of Perfection Fairfax was the colorful owner, Warren T. McCray, a turn of the century “wheeler dealer” who became Indiana governor and held the black honor of being the only Indiana chief executive who went directly from the Statehouse to a federal prison. For 12 years Perfection Fairfax ruled over McCray’s Orchard Lake Stock Farm, its 1,600 acres, and 500 head of registered Hereford cattle.

It’s an old trick that’s still going on.

Among many devices, McCray printed fancy brochures extolling the virtues of Perfection Fairfax and his offsprings. One brochure of World War I vintage quotes cattleman from coast to coast on their successes with Fairfax progeny. Among those from Indiana quoted were John W. Van Natta and Rainey McCoy. Tippocoono County cattle breeders.

According to Howard Washburn, a retired Newton County farmer and historian who had business dealings with McCray, McCray used an old device to increase the value of his cattle.

Washburn, who admitted the years had been tough on the farm. He was kept for riding, and he met with a fatal accident, having a water tank pipe driven through his chest. The insurance amounted to $750. The insurance company paid the lost money in their pockets. They came back with a whole load of thoroughbreds. The horse breeding program flourished at Green Acres until 1943, when the last were sold. The Raffertys not only bred horses, but raced them too, and did all right.

“Mrs. Rafferty was quite a horse trader,” the Major recalls. Only one mare remains today, “just a sort of monument to the old days,” as Mrs. Rafferty puts it.

“Of the 2,035 acres that comprise the farm today, all the wheat is normally in corn. Another 640 acres will be in oats, wheat and soybeans. Soybeans, the Major explains, makes a good wheat seedbed and, with their late harvest date, tend to ease the labor bottleneck.”

At this point, the article loses a few paragraphs and picks up discussing the first time use of extra nitrogen being added to the fields by a process that hadn’t been tried before.

“Anythious ammonia, in liquid form, was put in the ground with a special implement, but a custom outfit. A series of tubes for the ammonia run behind the shovels. In the ground the liquid turns to nitrogen gas. If successful, the system will probably be used more next year.”

“By the way, all the livestock, all the cropping and fertilizing add up to a lot of work. Eight families are a permanent part of the Green Acres general staff, each with a house of their own on different parts of the farm. The Raffertys are quite proud that they have no labor problems. The Major explains, makes a good wheat seedbed and, with their late harvest date, tend to ease the labor bottleneck.”

The year’s program is planned to the last detail and written down. First...ago, just out of high school Whenthe Major is away for a week or two, Harold is the boss. If there’s a problem that’s
were phantom herds. McCray then took the phony loan agreements and sold them to banks at discount rates. He made the mistake of sending letters through the mails, and had no knowledge of a note for $160,000 he allegedly gave McCray to cover the purchase of cattle.

McCray's resignation took effect at 10:00 a.m. on April 29, just 20 minutes before Judge Anderson sentenced him to 10 years at the Atlanta Federal Prison. As the sentence was being read in the federal courtroom, the marshal was receiving the oath of the governor in the Statehouse.

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Hendry told the court all he owned in the way of livestock was "two heifers and a dog". J.L. Williams, a partner with McCray in the Butte County Land and Cattle Co., of Belle Fourche, S.D., testified that he had never signed a note to McCray for $91,000, although he had signed one for $40,000 for the same herd of cows.

The jury deliberated only 15 minutes on April 28, 1924, before deciding McCray's guilt. The governor was not surprised on the 29th when Federal Judge A. B. Anderson ordered the U.S. Marshall to take McCray directly to the Marion County Jail. McCray said he thought he was free at least until his sentencing the next day.

However, McCray still was governor of Indiana. Courts and judges all over the state were stunned when Federal Judge A. B. Anderson ordered the U.S. Marshall to take McCray directly to the Marion County Jail. McCray said he thought he was free at least until his sentencing the next day. The honor of the position was a great loss for McCray, who had long been known as the "Great Governor". He was sorely missed, and the people of Indiana were left to wonder what might have been. McCray's administration coincided with the climax and downfall of the Klan's political dominance in Indiana. It was McCray's cronies who had used the Klan's reputation to empower themselves and advance their personal agendas.

McCray was the only one to testify for himself at his trial. The prosecution rested its case after three witnesses had testified. The defense called only McCray as a witness. The jury deliberated only 15 minutes on April 28, 1924, before finding McCray guilty of bribery. The governor was not surprised on the 29th when Federal Judge A. B. Anderson ordered the U.S. Marshall to take McCray directly to the Marion County Jail. McCray said he thought he was free at least until his sentencing the next day. The honor of the position was a great loss for McCray, who had long been known as the "Great Governor". He was sorely missed, and the people of Indiana were left to wonder what might have been. McCray's administration coincided with the climax and downfall of the Klan's political dominance in Indiana. It was McCray's cronies who had used the Klan's reputation to empower themselves and advance their personal agendas.

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