

Rush County Genealogical Society

VOLUME XI, ISSUE 2

JUNE, 2018

2018 RCGS Programs

Our Officers:

- *President:*
Carol Jones
- *Vice-President:*
Bill Baetz
- *Secretary:*
Katrina Cole-Cooper
- *Treasurer:*
Marilyn Yager

July 14: Wilbur Wright Birthplace and Museum Field Trip

Meet to carpool at the Rushville Elks at 9:00 a.m. or meet us at the museum at 10:00 a.m. Cost is \$6.00 and we will have a guide. The tour is very interesting, and includes the home where the Wrights lived and another building with numerous displays such as the full-size replica of the First Flyer and a video to watch. Many do not realize that the Wrights' maternal grandparents are buried in the Richland/Fisher Cemetery and their father Milton Wright preached his first sermon at the Hopewell Church in Richland Township. Please let us know if you are coming so we can let the museum know how many to expect. Address is 1525 N. County Road, Hagerstown, IN, 765-332-2495. Everyone is welcome! Bring a friend.

August 18—Larry Stout presentation on Kid McCoy, Boxer—Marilyn Yager, coordinator

September 8—Film Cemetery videos—Blue River Baptist, Barrett and Aldridge - No Meeting

October 13 - Historical Home Tour—Katrina Cooper, Marilyn Yager

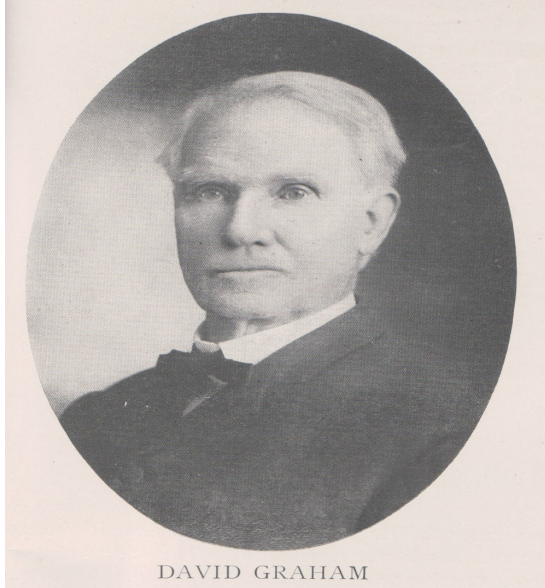
November 10—Circuit Riders—Katrina Cooper, Election of Officers
Time for Dues

December—No Meeting

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Rush County People, Buildings and Businesses



David Graham, First Superintendent of Rushville Schools

David Graham was born January 13, 1826 in Franklin County, Ohio in a log cabin on the National Road, the son of Mr. and Mrs. William G. Graham. He was the eldest of three children. His two brothers were Andrew and Thomas W. Graham. Both of Mr. Graham's great grandfathers served in the Revolution.

At eighteen years old, David Graham entered the academy at Reynolds, Ohio. Since a young boy, he had longed to go to school and never lost an opportunity to learn. He studied there two years and then began his teaching career in Logan County, Ohio. He would teach three months of the year – twenty-four days in each month, receiving fifty cents a day for his pay. He saved almost every cent toward his goal of gaining a higher education. He boarded with the patrons of the school and chopped wood, took care of the children, and did chores for his board. This was typical for school teachers of the time. Until he was twenty-four years old, he taught and went to school alternately.

David Graham told a story of his early days of teaching where the students got to the school before him on Christmas morning and locked him out and refused to let him in. He climbed to the roof of the school and placed a clap board over the chimney. The pupils were more than glad to let him in- and quickly!

Mr. Graham was able to save up \$36 and with a little help from his father he was able to attend Hanover College for six months. He then gained a teaching position at the Reynoldsburg Academy where he had been a student.

While here an acquaintance with a former schoolmate turned into a serious relationship and he married Miss Caroline Adams. After their marriage, he taught at the Academy at New

Washington in Clark County, Indiana. In 1862 he moved to Madison and became the Superintendent of the Madison public schools.

During the Civil War, Madison felt a considerable fear that the Confederates would try to invade the city. Volunteer Companies were organized and remained on duty night and day. Mr. Graham joined one of these companies and had at least one exciting experience while on guard one dark and cloudy evening when he was patrolling part of the river. He heard the swish of paddles in the water. He gradually saw the outlines of a boat and called out, "Halt and give the countersign". The person answered that he did not know the countersign, so David told him to come with him and to not run away or he would have to shoot him and he did not want to kill anyone. The young man was taken to headquarters and it was found that he had been across the river to see his girlfriend and had gone without getting the countersign.

In 1865, Mr. Graham became Superintendent of the public schools in Columbus and during his four years tenure, he gained a warm place in the heart of the people there. One of his daughters lived there after marriage and he visited often during the last years of his life.

It was in 1869 that Rushville called David Graham to become their Superintendent of public schools. The schools were poorly organized, but the city had grown to such an extent that a graded school had become a necessity. It was his kind and sympathetic disposition, his tact, and above all his lovable nature which allowed him to accomplish in a short time what it would have taken others years to accomplish. The teachers that were at the school when he came were Misses Thomson, Fisher, Miller, Titt, and Williams who gave him much help in his work. In addition to being Superintendent of the schools, Graham also taught school. As a monument to his work, the newly-built high school was called the Graham School which stood for many years as a reminder of this "grand old man" as he was called.

David Graham retired from the public schools in 1883 and became a teacher in a private school for two years. In 1890 he accepted a position in the Rushville Academy which was established by his brother Andrew. He later retired from school work and invested the remainder of his life in making other people happy. He built cottages and rented them to poor people and then helped them to buy homes at reasonable prices. He became interested in other enterprises and bought stock in the Innis, Pearce and Co. factory. In 1886 he was elected Treasurer of Rushville on the Republican ticket.

His wife, Caroline died suddenly in 1900 which cast a shadow over his life which was never removed, but he never ceased his efforts to make others happy.

He was active in the United Presbyterian Church and was seldom absent from church services no matter how bad the weather. He was an elder of the church from the time of its organization in 1879. His help and presence in the church came to be as much an accepted thing as the work of the minister.

The Grahams had four daughters: Ida, Minnie, Etta and Anna. Ida was born in 1856 and died in 1871 at the age of fifteen. She is buried at the East Hill Cemetery in Rushville in section 4.

Anna was born May 27, 1858 and married Lewis Kinsey Ong. They lived in Columbus and had two children: Graham Ong of New York and Carrie Ong. Graham Ong, Jr. was

David Graham

their only grandchild. Anna died August 13, 1930 at the Bartholomew County Hospital after an operation. She was buried along with her husband at the East Hill Cemetery in Rushville in section 4.

Minnie Graham was born about 1864 in Madison, Indiana. She married William Ditmars, son of Cornelius and Caroline Banta Ditmars. The couple had two children: Cortland Ditmars and Jane Ditmars Deming. She lived in Franklin, Johnson County, Indiana when she died at the age of 80 and she was buried with her husband in the Hopewell Presbyterian Church Cemetery.

Mary Etta was born on August 8, 1869 in Clark County, Indiana. On February 10, 1886 she united in marriage to John W. Ditmars at Rushville. John was a native of Johnson County and brother of her sister's husband, William. The couple lived most of their married life a mile and a quarter west of Franklin in the Hopewell community. To this union was born two daughters: Mrs. Edith D. Brown of the Hopewell Community and Mrs. Frank Hasse of San Francisco, California. They had three grandchildren: Iliff, Virginia and Jeanette Brown. Mary Etta was an active member of the First Presbyterian Church. The couple celebrated their 50th Wedding Anniversary on February 10, 1936 with a reception at the church attended by a large number of friends and family. They moved to Franklin on September 11, 1935 and were residents of the Masonic Home. She died March 25, 1937 and was buried at the Hopewell Presbyterian Church Cemetery.

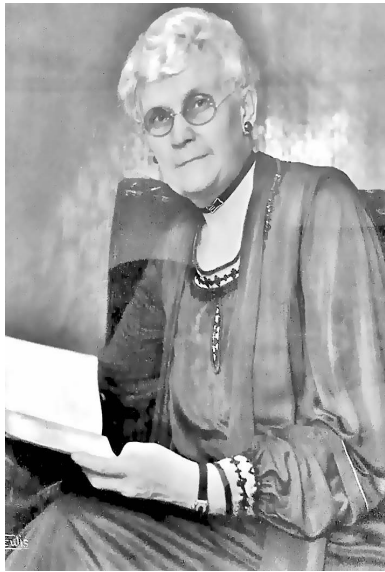
Rushville's High School was completely destroyed by fire in 1906. Morris Winship was given the contract to build the new high school for a price of \$51,532.11. The school was named Graham School after David Graham. It opened September 5, 1907.

Professor Graham died October 22, 1909 in Rushville. The day before he had been unconscious most of the day and did not recognize his daughters. Shortly before his death, he asked for his Bible and the children who were at his bedside read a chapter from the Bible. He then repeated the Lord's Prayer, asked to be turned over, and peacefully went to sleep never to wake again. He was buried at the Rushville East Hill Cemetery.



GRAHAM HIGH SCHOOL, RUSHVILLE, INDIANA

J-177



Miss Belle Gregg

Miss Belle Gregg, Pioneer Teacher of Rushville

Miss Belle Gregg was born in Indiana on March 6, 1860, the daughter of Samuel F. and Mary Swan Gregg. She resided most of her life in Rushville, graduating from Rushville High School in 1879. She began teaching in 1881 and taught until early 1925 when she retired due to ill health after having taught forty-four years. She taught at Glenwood and at the Havens School in Rushville before going to the Jackson School in September, 1907 where she remained until retirement. In 1926 the Jackson School was given the name of Belle Gregg in honor of the woman who had won the love and honor of many students throughout Rush County.

In the last year of her life, Belle Gregg was extended an honorary membership in the Rushville Business and Professional Women's Club which she accepted and it was publicly announced during National Business Women's week. She was a member of the Methodist church.

She had one sister, Emma Josephine Gregg who she lived with at 618 North Jackson Street at the time of her death. Emma was born in Indianapolis on October 1, 1855 and in 1899 married Samuel Craig. They had one daughter Mary Louise Messick who died in 1931. She was a member of the St. Paul's M. E. Church. She died March 11, 1937 and was buried in Rushville East Hill Cemetery.

William H. Gregg was Belle's brother who was born in Indiana on February 22, 1862 and had resided in Rushville practically all of his life. For many years Mr. Gregg operated a machine shop at the rear of his residence at 403 West First Street. He was a member of the First Presbyterian Church, Red Men, Odd Fellows, and Knights of Pythias lodges.

Her other brother, James Franklin Gregg, was born November 16, 1853 in Indiana. He was a carpenter and lived at 22 South Tacoma in Indianapolis. He fell while working on some scaffolding and died of his injuries. He struck a tree on the way down and hit head first – his neck was broken and skull fractured. The body was brought back to Rushville with the funeral at the home of his sisters on the corner of First and Jackson Streets. His wife was Teresa Maud Jemison and they had two sons, Cort and Fred Gregg, and a daughter, Irene Gregg.

**RUSH COUNTY
GENEALOGICAL SOCIETY**

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Our Mission:

*To bring together those interested in the
history and genealogy
of Rush County*

Due to growth in the city which then was reflected in high attendance in the schools, the school board decided a grade school was needed on the West end of town. They built a new six room school building at the cost of \$15,000 and the First District School, as it was called then, opened on January 4, 1892 with the following teachers: Minnie Beale, first grade; Belle Gregg, second grade; Lizzie Keck, third grade; and Mary Breckinridge, fourth grade. Emerson Ross was janitor. Miss Gregg was made Principal the next year. She continued to teach in addition to her duties as Principal. The Havens School was later built on this same sight.

The Jackson Elementary School (later called Belle Gregg) was built in 1906-1907. Unfortunately, the high school burned down on the morning of May 6, 1906 so the town had two buildings to build as school officials had purchased the site at Jackson and Eighth street due to the demand for another grade school building with the great growth of the city. The general contract was given to Morris Winship for \$25,982. One source states the school was first called Jackson School after Andrew Jackson and another stated it was named that due to it being located on Jackson Street. In May 1955, work was started on the Belle Gregg Addition which was built on the back of the school lot and was to include indoor play space, an elementary library, a multi-purpose room large enough to house the PTA group, a small stage for programs, and space for a lunch program.

