

Rush County Genealogical Society

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Rush County Families

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Jesse Hill, the oldest son of Thomas and Anna (Haskett) Hill, was born February 1, 1786, in North Carolina. His schooling was quite limited, and what schooling he received was in the Friends' schools in North Carolina.

In 1807 the Hill family moved to Wayne County, Indiana, near Richmond. Soon after the family arrived in Indiana, Jesse's father and mother both died, leaving him, at the age of 21, in charge of seven children younger than himself. The children were placed among the Friends.

On August 10, 1809, Jesse was married to Mabel Overman, believed to be a daughter of Nathan and Tamar (Brothers) Overman. The young couple was obliged to travel to Eaton, Preble County, Ohio, to marry, as there was no civil organization in Indiana at that time. The children of this marriage were: Levi, Thomas, Reuben, John, Tamar, Elwood, Jonathan, Anna, Isaac, Emily, Huldah, and Benjamin.

After their marriage, Jesse and Mabel located northeast of Richmond but soon after removed to a farm northeast of Cambridge City, which he entered from the government in 1813. By 1826, however, he removed to a new farm in Rush County's Ripley Township, on the east side of the town of Carthage, becoming one of the first settlers in the township. Jesse Hill worked in the first woolen mill and grist mill in Carthage which belonged to Robert Hill of Richmond and tended to his own farm with the assistance of his sons. The history of Carthage makes a point of mentioning that Jesse's farm was the second farm in the area to have its wheat crop harvested by a steam-powered thresher. Jesse's son, Elwood, and Noah Small, having joined forces, traveled to Troy, New York, to purchase an engine. Not finding an engine already fabricated to suit their purposes, they ordered an engine built to their specifications. To their great satisfaction, the steam-powered thresher harvested 350 to 400 bushels of wheat per day.

Jesse assisted in organizing the Friends' meeting at Carthage and was Overseer for many years. While he never had any political aspirations, he was public-spirited and a power for good in the new country. After a life of usefulness he passed away on the 7th day of September, 1871. Mabel followed him in death on April 1, 1876, at the age of 85 years, 4 months and 15 days. Both were laid to rest at the Carthage Friends Cemetery.



Buildings and Businesses

Rush County's long association with horses has been well documented in county histories. The breeders and their farms along, with others associated with the horse racing industry, are easily discernible for the notoriety and wealth their accomplishments brought to them and the county. Horse ownership was not exclusive to those families but it was as important, if not more so, to the average pioneer family. A horse was more than a means of transportation. A horse was an integral part of life on a farm – a labor-saving implement. Consequently, the loss of a horse was more than an inconvenience to the farmer and his family. And the loss of a horse due to thievery called for men to take action against the wrongdoer.

All across the nation, groups were formed to track down a horse thief and return the stolen property to its rightful owner. On March 9, 1852, the Indiana State Legislature showed its support for the growing movement and enacted legislation to govern the formation of Horse Thief Detective Associations. Among other provisions, the Associations could not have less than 10 members, or more than 100, to be a legal company formed for the purpose of detecting and apprehending horse thieves and other felons. In March of 1907 there was some adjustment to the legislative act, most notably that the membership of any such group could extend from not less than 10 members "to any number." These groups were empowered to call upon other peace officers of the State in their pursuit and apprehension of horse thieves and other felons to reclaim stolen property and each and every member of the Association, "when engaged in arresting offenders against the criminal laws of this State, shall be entitled to all the rights and privileges of constables."



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The Rush County Historical Society Museum houses a collection of Rush Co. Ind. HTDA No. 190 Constable pins, pictured at left

Two such Horse Thief Detective Associations are known to have existed at different times in Rush County. A 1908 report of the Indiana Secretary of State identified the formation of the Henry & Rush County Horse Thief Detective Association No. 192 on March 18, 1908, and a digitized Journal of the National Horse Thief Detective Agency at its 58th Annual Session held in Richmond, Indiana, on October 1-2, 1918¹ lists Association No. 190 of Rush County.

The by-laws of the Rush County Horse Thief Detective Association state, in part: "The undersigned, citizens of the State of Indiana, having formed an association for the protection of themselves against depredations of thieves, robbers, counterfeiters, incendiaries, forgers, and all other law violators and for the purpose of arresting and bringing to justice all such offenders and aiding each other in the recovery of stolen property, do hereby mutually pledge themselves to be governed by the following by-laws."² Upon application and approval, as well as payment of \$1.00 annual dues, law-abiding citizens of Rush County joined the ranks of the Association and welcomed its protective powers.

An Illinois publication *The Prairie Farmer* featured an article on December 1, 1923, concerning the Rush County Horse Thief Detective Association, stating that the Association had been formed 11 years previous but had not been particularly active. It had grown slowly from the original 10 members, all of whom were farmers, to 80 members. Due to the Association's involvement in apprehending an arsonist who had burned 14 barns in Rush County, however, the membership of the Association began to swell.

"The interest in Horse Thief Detective Associations is high in Rush county," said W. H. McMillen, who has been the only president of the Rush county association. "In addition to our company with 356 members, there are three other companies, one with 70 members, one with 78 members and one with 204 members, most of them in Rush county. This large membership thoroughly spread over the county is a real menace to law breakers." McMillen is further quoted, "Every member of the Rush county association has a sign on his place to show that he is a detective. The signs are highly respected in the county and mem-

bers of the association are practically immune from activities of thieves.”

It would seem that the apprehension of the arsonist was sufficient incentive for the farmers of Rush County to join the Association’s ranks to triple the membership number of 115 that had been reported on January 9, 1922, in *The Daily Republican*. That 1922 article further stated that the election of officers had been held at the Association’s annual meeting resulting in the re-election of Will H. McMillin as president, Phil Wilk as vice-president and Frank E. Sample as secretary and treasurer. Further, Will Redman and Ollie Offutt were elected captains and Hal Green and Earl F. Priest were chosen doorkeepers. Of the 115 members, 54 had been sworn in as constables and had the authority to recover stolen property and apprehend thieves.

With interest in the Association high, and its success rate of thwarting thievery commendable, it’s a wonder now that

so little is known today about the Horse Thief Detective Associations. As the need for these Associations diminished, however, the Associations faded into history. It is only with the same dogged determination as the Association’s members and considerable digging into family archives and museum relics, that the good deeds of so many will come to light.

1. Wabash College Digital Collections
<http://replica.palni.edu/cdm/ref/collection/p15705coll34/id/216>
2. Indiana Memory Digital Collections, Rush County Horse Thief Detective Association By-Laws;
<http://cdm16066.contentdm.oclc.org/cdm/ref/collection/p16066coll19/id/521>

From Our Officers

Meeting Notes

Thank you to our Guest Speakers at February’s meeting: Allen Coon and Bill Ward

Al and Bill had plenty of interesting stories to share with us from their days of yesteryear, having lived long and full lives in Rush County. We wish to extend a heartfelt Thank You to both for taking the time to meet with us on a brisk and windy February afternoon.

March Meeting

There are still plenty of obituaries to be organized and we will be taking a look at what cemeteries still need to be documented. Come and see how you can help!

May Meeting

RCGS was contacted by Donald Craig, a Craig family researcher from Indianapolis. Donald has been researching his Craig family from Rush and Shelby counties since 2005. In an effort to share the Craig family history, and to perhaps network with any other Craig researchers, Donald wished to visit RCGS to make a presentation of his work.

We hope you will join us in welcoming Donald to our May meeting.

TIME TO CHECK YOUR RECORDS ~ ARE YOUR DUES PAID FOR 2015?

From the Daily Republican, March 24, 1915:

GARBED IN BUTCHERS APRONS WELL KNOWN MASONS SERVE AS "WAITERS"

James E. Watson Create Furor When he Charges Men at His Table Tried to Bribe Him

THEY TIPPED HIM A PENNY

Some of the foremost Masons in Rushville tied butchers aprons up under arms and "waded in" as waiters at the Mason pig roast last night which was "sandwiched in" between work in the third degree given in the afternoon and at night.

E. H. Wolfe state inspector of the Masonic lodge, "presided" as "head waiter." James E. Watson was listed as an "ordinary waiter", F. G. Hackleman was the "chief cook." The next in the retinue of "servants" was Ben A. Cox, "second cook", and then came Rush G. Budd the official "pig carver." The menu card announced that J. B. Kinsinger was the "coffee maker" and W. H. Amos the "pastry maid." George C. Wyatt was "dish washer" and J. P. Frazee the "linen girl." Will M. Sparks' duties consisted of "compounding the salad" and E. H. Payne was "water boy." F. M. Sparks brought up the rear on the menu as "potato peeler."

The "waiters" kept the guests in an uproar a good bit of the time. They stood at attention, with their apron strings drawn taut, as the crowd was seated. Directly all the men had chosen a place, at a signal just like "regular" waiters would do they "right-faced" stood with shoulders erect and then marched to the kitchen.

James E. Watson happened to be so "unfortunate" as to draw a table where three ministers and the superintendent of schools were seated. Thinking to keep him in good humor, they "tipped" him a penny. Mr. Watson straightway caused an uproar by calling the attention of the "head waiter" to the breach of etiquette. He denounced those whom he served in severe terms, declaring that they sought to bribe him, when he was a perfectly decent "waiter". The money was turned over to the "head waiter" who asserted in public before the assembled audience, that his subordinate was entirely in the right because he should not carry such a large sum of money around with him.

The menu consisted of roast pig, baked potatoes, baked apples, pickles, bread, butter, coffee, sugar, cream and cigars.

Saturday, March 4, 1865, started out dark, damp, and disagreeable. Most streets in Washington remained unpaved, and two days of incessant rain created a record amount of mud. "The streets and sidewalks were encrusted with from two to ten inches of muddy paste, through which men and horses plodded wearily," wrote a local reporter.

Tens of thousands of visitors streamed into town for the reinauguration of President Abraham Lincoln, filling "every available room, bed, nook, and corner," only to reckon with the mud and one another. But the intrepid crowd would be rewarded with a ceremony of historic proportions and the finest speech this president ever produced.

Reporter Noah Brooks, a friend of the Lincolns, saw what many others remarked about: "just as Lincoln stepped forward to take the oath of office, the sun, which had been obscured by rain-clouds, burst forth in splendor." The next day Lincoln asked him, "Did you notice that sunburst? It made my heart jump." On Sunday, in a sermon at the Capitol attended by the Lincolns, Methodist Bishop Matthew Simpson alluded to the sunburst and said in the same sudden manner, peace would "burst upon the nation and dispel the clouds of war." Other inaugural observers noticed the remarkable appearance of a star/planet in the mid-day sky.

The thunder of cannon announced the ceremony's end and the procession returned to the White House, with Lincoln and his youngest son in the lead carriage. Mr. and Mrs. Shelby Cullom, old friends from Lincoln's hometown in Illinois, watched from a nearby window. Mrs. Cullom saw "the exalted look which Mr. Lincoln wore." She recalled, "It was the look of a man inspired," which surprised her because it was the "first time that anything about Lincoln impressed me as remarkable." To her, his face appeared to have "the most peaceful, sublime and prophetic look which a human countenance could assume."

Excerpted from: <http://www.abrahamlincolnonline.org/lincoln/education/inaugural2.htm>

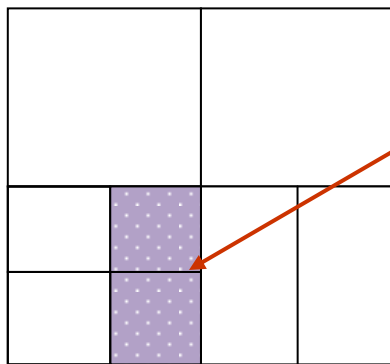


Crowd at Lincoln's Second Inaugural Address

March 4, 1865

Lincoln's Second Inaugural Address ended with the words:

"With malice toward none; with charity for all; with firmness in the right, as God gives us to see the right, let us strive on to finish the work we are in; to bind up the nation's wounds; to care for him who shall have borne the battle, and for his widow, and his orphan--to do all which may achieve and cherish a just and lasting peace, among ourselves, and with all nations. "

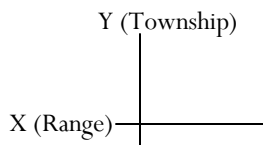


William Junken's 80 acres
E 1/2 SW 1/4 of Sec 5

One of the many things that family researchers like to do is determine where their ancestor lived. This requires searching for deeds. This also requires an understanding of legal descriptions once a deed is found. Fortunately for Rush County, Indiana researchers, Rush County lies west of Ohio.

When the federal government started acquiring large tracts of land in the west, a system to survey what it owned was developed to aid in keeping track of eventual sales. Additionally, multiple teams of surveyors were needed and everyone had to record their results the same way.

The system developed by the General Land Office is called the Government Land Office Grid System which divides land into 36-square-mile units called townships. Each township has a township and range designation to define its location on the grid, where the township designation is equivalent to a location on the y-axis of a standard graph, and the range designation is equivalent to a location on the x-axis.



Townships are numbered in six-mile increments north or south from a selected parallel of latitude called a base line, and ranges are numbered in six-mile increments west or east of a selected meridian of longitude called a principle meridian. Note that the word "township" refers BOTH to the tract of land itself AND to its distance from the baseline.

Townships are sub-divided into 36 1-x-1-mile parcels called sections. Sections are numbered from 1 to 36 for identification, and divided into quarters, which are further quartered to describe a property location. (see Section diagram above)

An example of a land description in deeds can be found in one of the first land grants recorded in Book A in the Rush County Recorder's office. On November 13, 1822, William Junken purchased 80 acres, described as: the East half of the Southwest quarter of Section five in Township thirteen of Range ten, containing 80 acres. (This can also be abbreviated: E 1/2 SW 1/4 Sec 5 T 13 R 10.) Although William may have needed a knowledgeable guide to direct him through the forest to this 'clearly identified' parcel, his descendants are able to use the internet to 'zoom in' on a map and readily identify where that parcel of 80 acres is located.

The government's official site for information regarding public land contains an interactive map to locate and identify parcels of land by the Township-Range coordinates found in deeds. The site, GeoCommunicator, is found at :

http://www.geocommunicator.gov/GeoComm/Isis_home/home/

On the left-side menu bar, open "Interactive Maps" and select PLSS. A page titled Land Survey Information System will open. There you will see a map of the United States with shaded areas. Zoom in on Indiana, and keep zooming in until you see the townships and sections. The more you zoom in on the section you are interested in, the more defined the survey markings become. You will then be able to more definitively locate the land your ancestors purchased, as the grid system is overlaid on a present day map.

Using this interactive map, William Junken's 80 acres was located on the west side of East Hill Cemetery, south of the Flatrock River. Where did your ancestor purchase land?

**RUSH COUNTY
GENEALOGICAL SOCIETY**

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Our Mission:

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



March Reader's Challenge:

This month's Reader's Challenge comes from the Rush County Historical Society Museum volunteers. The above picture has been found among many pictures in their vast collection but is only tentatively identified by its donor as "Guffin/Guffie?" on the back.

If you know where this store and filling station may have been located, the Museum volunteers would love to hear from you!

The answer to December's Reader's Challenge:

Former Carthage resident Earl B. Marlatt (1892-1976) wrote the popular Methodist hymn "Are Ye Able?" in 1926. Congratulations to Cecilia Mathews for answering correctly!