

Rush County Genealogical Society

VOLUME IX, ISSUE 2

JUNE 2016

Upcoming Events of RCGS

Our Officers:

- *President:*
Carol Jones
- *Vice-President:*
Bill Baetz
- *Secretary:*
Katrina Cole-Cooper
- *Treasurer:*
Shirley Biehl
- *Historian:*
Kevin Harr

July, 2016 – Reminder -No Meeting in July. Several members are attending the Midwestern Roots Family History and Genealogy Conference held each year at the Eastside Marriott Inn July 15-16.

August, 2016- Trip to Allen County Library Genealogy Center, Fort Wayne, Indiana – second largest Genealogy Library in the United States. We will meet at the South end of the Elks Lodge parking lot ready to leave at 8:00 am, Saturday, August 13, 2016. RSVP by July 31st to rcgsociety@gmail.com – how many to attend and are you willing to drive? If driving, what is capacity of your vehicle. Library closes at 6:00 pm. Bring notebooks, pens, pencils, family information, lists of items you are searching for, etc.

September, 2016 – We will be having a Tour of Old Homes around Rushville on Saturday, September 10th beginning at 2 pm. We will be looking at the homes with discussion of the families who lived in them. Kevin Harr is in charge of this event. The Parks Department hay wagon has been secured. We still need a driver.

October, 2016 - On Saturday, the 8th, we will be workday on our Family Trees at Rushville Library – bring any brick walls and we will see if we can break down some walls.

November, 2016 – Presentation on Cemeteries by DNR's Jeannie Regan-Dinius.

December, 2016 - No Meeting.

June 11th we had an excellent presentation given by Claire Mercer of Carthage who told us about Blazing Star, a Cheyenne Indian who lived in Carthage in the 1880's. She shared photos and told us about this much loved resident of the community.



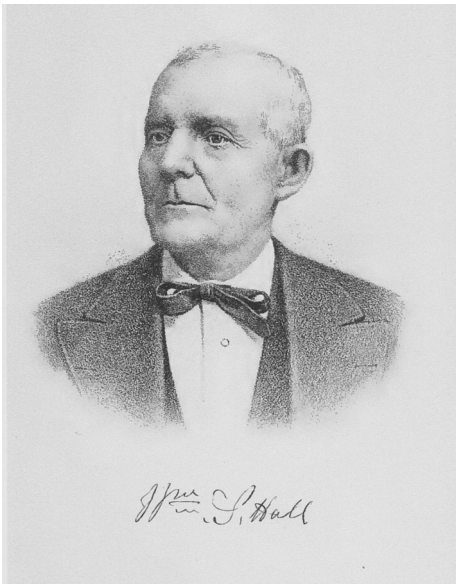
Inside this issue:

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|-----------------------------|-----|---|
| <i>Future Activities</i> | 1 | Another event you might be interested in attending: Time Travel Centuries of Memories sponsored by the Federation of Genealogical Societies Conference, August 31 – September 3, 2016 in Springfield, IL. For more information: http://fgsconference.org . Platinum sponsors of the event are Ancestry and Family Search. Mary M. Tedesco, J. Mark Lowe and CeCe Moore are some of the speakers. |
| <i>Blazing Star</i> | 1 | |
| <i>Conference / Project</i> | 1 | |
| <i>William S. Hall</i> | 2-5 | *****We need your help!! We are looking for the Last Living Civil War for Rush County for the Last Soldier Project being done by the Benton County Genealogical Society. No one is listed for Rush County. |
| <i>Identify Photos</i> | 6 | |

Rush County People, Buildings and Businesses

William S. Hall -- Farmer, Cabinet Maker, Justice of the Peace, State Representative, Washington Township Trustee, Legislator, and Founder of First Consolidated High School in the United States.

By Katrina Cole Cooper with the assistance of Gary Crull



Young Tobias Hall is said to have come to America from England in 1720 first settling in the New Jersey area. He had a large family. The youngest son, Joseph was born about 1761. He was the son of Tobias' third wife and she died when the child was about 2 years old. Joseph was taken under the wing of older brother Josiah Hall who became a captain in the Revolutionary War. Having no one with whom he could leave Joseph, he took him along to the war. Joseph fought for his country during the last two years of the war.

In 1782 Joseph married Sarah Allen. They and moved to Fayette County, Pennsylvania and later to Butler County, Ohio in 1796. After settling there, they had the misfortune of losing the property on account of a bad title to the land. Joseph passed away about 1806. Eight children were born of this union: Stephen, Jane, Sarah, Thomas (father of William S. Hall), Kesiah, Joseph and Jacob.

After their father died, Thomas took charge of the family until he volunteered as a Soldier during the War of 1812 under General Hull at the time of the Surrender at Detroit. As a prisoner he was sent home on furlough and luckily never traded.

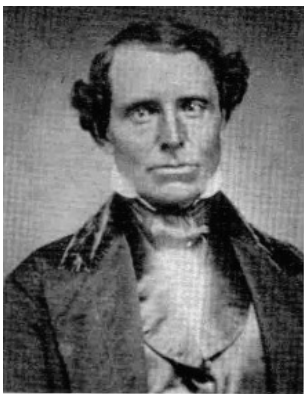
Thomas Hall married Matilda Shrader, daughter of Aaron and Elizabeth (Rowan) Shrader on March 4, 1813 and son William S. was born on March 8, 1814. In 1818 the family moved to Fayette County, Indiana, five miles southeast of Bentonville where Indians were plentiful. They would kill their hogs and even killed a valuable mare just to get the bell she wore. Like many settlers, they had no money and lived a rough life. They relied on the rifle to kill bear, deer and turkey in order to eat. Thomas and Matilda had the following children: William S., Jane, Elizabeth, Joseph, Jacob A., Aaron S., John F., Sarah A., and Thomas S., all of whom reached adulthood. Thomas passed away July 27, 1862 and Matilda died January 23, 1870.

William S. Hall was only able to attend school a few terms which averaged two months per

term. On his first day of school, he later related that his father had to trim brush out of the way with an axe and a neighbor, William Dickey, plowed a furrow as a path with his old gray horse to a rough log cabin. This district school house had no floor and was built leaving out a log on three sides for light and a fireplace on the other wall. The building was on an Indian Trail which led to Connersville so the Indians would come through, sometimes drunk after their trip and would try to frighten the children. Some children would not attend school out of fear of the Indians.

Up to age 17, William's health had been poor so his parents sent him to Cincinnati to learn a trade. His uncle Joseph Hall was a cabinet maker and he apprenticed with him probably thinking he could at times attend school. However, his trade kept him working. He was able to get books and read in his leisure time. In March of 1835 he completed his apprenticeship and continued to work with his uncle until December of that year as a journeyman cabinet maker. He then moved to Washington Township, Rush County, Indiana at the end of that year shortly before an epidemic of Scarlet Fever. He got little rest in the next few weeks as he was kept busy making caskets.

In February, 1839, William was elected Justice of the Peace for Washington Township and served until 1847. July, 1847 he was placed in nomination by the Democracy of Rush County for Representative for State Legislature. Even with a Whig majority in the county by 500 people, he lost by only 165 votes. In 1853, he was elected as one of the three Trustees of Washington Township. When the board was reduced to one Trustee in 1859, he was elected and held the office until 1862 when he resigned to accept the nomination as Representative to the State Legislature. He was elected by a good majority. At the close of his term, he was again elected Township Trustee where he took a strong interest in schools. He employed only the best teachers and was involved in the building of many of the school houses at the time. The last one being a graded school building in Raleigh.



William S. Hall and his first wife, Nancy Legg Hall

On January 28, 1841, William married Nancy M. Legg, the daughter of Samuel and Catherine Legg, pioneers of Rush County. They had eleven children, four died in infancy, four in the month of October, 1860 with diphtheria. The mother, Nancy, died in August 31, 1859. Only 3 of the eleven children grew to adulthood: George W. (b. 1843), Frank J. (b. 1844), and Lafe G. (b. 1847). On June 26, 1860 William married Mrs. Malinda Hatfield Knotts, a widow and daughter of Levi Hatfield, also a pioneer of the Raleigh community. She had two sons by her first marriage: Oliver and David Knotts and the couple had five more children, three of whom lived: William A. (b. 1862), Ada A. (b. 1864), and Robert J (b. 1866). Malinda died July 7, 1887.

Being an expert carpenter, William is said to have been able to build a piece of furniture with wooden pegs so neatly that the pegs were barely visible. William S. Hall drafted the plans for his unique eight-sided house. The sides were built on the ground from virgin yellow poplar timber cut from the farm and raised into place in 1855. When the sides were completed, all the neighbors were invited to a "house-raising". A large crowd came, many expecting a complete failure. Some had the idea that a left-handed person was an oddity and not capable of such a large undertaking. The house was put together one section at a time without a hitch and to the surprise of many who were there. The house was just two rooms, an upstairs room and a downstairs room. In the center was a large fireplace to heat the home which could be re-kindled from the front or the back. It was some time before partitions were built to divide the rooms. Closets of standing room only size with invisible latches were built in the corners. Many a slave was hidden in these while on their way to Canada. Hall believed in freedom for all and that no human should be bought and sold. Later four rooms downstairs and four rooms and a large hall upstairs were made. When Hall was no longer able to run the farm, his only daughter, Ada and husband Delbert Miles bought the farm and eventually re-decorated and got rid of the hiding places. A cabinet shop was located on the north-east side of the yard where Mr. Hall made cabinets.



Malinda (Hatfield) Knotts Hall

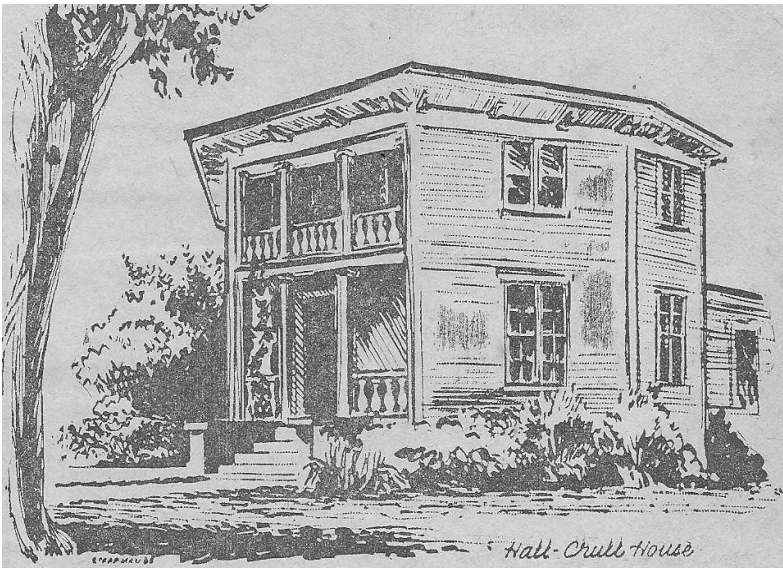
When Indiana townships were first organized, each township was set up with three trustees to look after township affairs. As stated before, William Hall was elected as one of the trustees. All matters pertaining to schools were left to him so when it went to one trustee, Hall was it. The township had eight district schools and it was impossible to fully staff with competent teachers. Hall believed that the hope of the country lay in Education and he thought of the idea of a central township school. Many opposed this; however, in the Fall of 1877 they opened a new school – a brick two story T-shaped building with one room on the upper level and two rooms on the lower level. Taylor Kitchen and his wife and Miss Cornelia Loder were hired to teach. There was a stable behind the school for the horses the students drove to school. The stalls were wide and pupils often drove the horse and buggy into the stall and left them still hitched during school. In 1879 Lemuel Shock, Lizzie Ging and Miss Fannie Meredith took charge of the school. There was no age limit – children from the age of four up to a man age 25. Students even came from other townships and states.

Fannie Meredith later married Lafayette Hall, one of William S. Hall's older sons. Their grandson later lived in the Octagon house. Walter Crull, his wife Rhoda (Durham) and son Martin moved to the eight-sided house in 1928. The house had pink and white striped awnings which overhung the first and second floor verandas and the double windows downstairs.



William Hall held many offices, but is best known for founding the first Consolidated School in the United States. He consolidated the nine township schools into five – one school in the center of the township and one at each of the four corners of the township. The last school building for the Township was built and dedicated in 1906, one year after he died. Many a young man starting in life has heeded William Hall’s advice and became prosperous. He was always helping the poor and needy if he found them deserving and is said to have administered more estates than

The Raleigh School, first Consolidated School in U.S. any other man in this locality. The held the respect and confidence of those who associated with him for years. Members of the community affectionately called him “Old Man Honorable”, “Father Hall”, and “Uncle William”. William S. Hall died May 20, 1905 at the age of 91 in Washington Township, Rush County, Indiana. His son, George Hall was Sheriff in Rush County, Lafayette “Lafe” was a farmer and Frank J. Hall had a law office in Rushville and also served as Lieutenant Governor under Thomas R. Marshall.



Hall-Crull Octagon House on Mays-Raleigh Road



William Hall relaxing in sitting room.

**RUSH COUNTY
GENEALOGICAL SOCIETY**

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Our Mission:

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

We now have a new website address: <http://www.rcgsociety.org>. Thanks goes to Bill Baetz who gives his time as webmaster.



Check out our Facebook page. We received a message from someone who has found photos belonging to the Stokes Family. If you are related, she is hoping to get these photos back to a family member. We have many old photos posted by various people who are looking for family that might wish them or simply to help them to identify individuals in their family photos.

For instance: Here is a family photo of the Tribbey or Kennedy Family. Some that have been identified are Blount and Essie (McDaniel) Sharpe (to right of center post in back row and their children Marlin and Mary (little girl with white hair bow and "Red" is little boy beside her). Burl & Lena McFatrige Kennedy –lady with dark neckline in center of photo and Burl is on her left - by post.

Taken approximately 1910-probably Arlington area.



Could these people be part of your family? Charley and Josie Custer.