

Jasper County Historical Society

The Jasper County Historical Society's (JCHS) was organized on June 30, 1966 and incorporated as a nonprofit on August 28, 1969. The JCHS meets monthly September to December and February to June. The Society has a museum that is open to the public on the first and third Saturdays of each month. It also maintains several historic structures at the Jasper County Fairgrounds that are open to the public during fair week.

The JCHS collects and preserves items of significance to the history of Jasper County and provides speakers for local groups, schools, and other groups outside the County. JCHS meets with individuals and families seeking genealogical information and photographs from its collections. It also publishes the *Vintage Views* magazine.

Weston Cemetery

Weston Cemetery is the third oldest cemetery of the 58 recorded cemeteries within Jasper County. The first burial occurred on August 24, 1842, (five years after the first settlers appeared in what is now Rensselaer). The owner of the original section of the cemetery, Dr. Henry Weston who was the son-in-law of the eventual city's namesake, gave the land to the City of Rensselaer in 1868. At the time the city platted the cemetery (1873) there were already about 200 recorded burials.

There are over 700 veterans buried in Weston Cemetery. Veteran burials encompass all wars beginning with the War of 1812. In Section A of the old section there is a row of Civil War veterans buried next to each other. This area is known to cemetery employees as "Civil War Row". The military ranks of those within Weston Cemetery range from General (two), to private/airman and seaman. The cemetery also has a former Majority/Minority Leader of the Congressional House of Representatives laid to rest within its confines.

The cemetery has been added to numerous times, through purchases or gifts to arrive to its current size. A board of trustees

The Jasper County Historical Society
presents the First Annual

Memories Alive

at

WESTON
CEMETERY



September 22, 2018
2:00 pm EDT

Tour starts at the Gifford Shelter in Brookside Park
Rain date September 29
Tickets: Adults \$10; Under 12 \$5

50¢

governed the cemetery until the 1980's at which time the board was dissolved and the City of Rensselaer assumed full responsibility of the cemetery operations.

(abridged from the City's website at <http://cityofrensselaerin.com/department/index.php?structureid=17>)

The Walking Tour

This year's walk will be confined to the far eastern part of Weston Cemetery. It will feature eight of the 7500+ graves in Weston Cemetery. Costumed actors will tell the stories of the featured deceased. Those attending will be divided into groups, with different groups starting at different stations on the tour.

We hope the event will be entertaining and educational. Because the Cemetery has many more than eight interesting stories to tell, the JCHS plans to make walking tours an annual event.

Featured Decedents

A. *Margaret Babcock Paulus (1897-1983)*

Margaret Paulus was the daughter of William Babcock (1862-1930) who overcame two spectacular elevator fires and a partner who embezzled to build an elevator business that may have been the largest of its kind in Indiana. He owned grain elevators at Rensselaer, Pleasant Ridge, Parr, Virgie, Fair Oaks, and Roselawn. Jasper County Farm Bureau purchased the elevators in 1945.

In 1924 Margaret married Raymond Paulus, a hydraulic engineer for Allis Chalmers in Milwaukee. The couple lived in Wisconsin for several years. About 1931 they moved back to Rensselaer and Raymond worked in the Babcock business. Margaret's passion was genealogy. She published her findings in several books and also compiled the first list of war veterans buried in Jasper County cemeteries.

B. *George W. Spittler (1813-1862)*

In 1834 George and his father traveled to Indiana looking for land. In 1835 he returned to a site south of Brook where he erected a cabin. A few years later that cabin hosted the first court in the County. In 1841 George moved his family to a site just south of Rensselaer. He was the first school teacher in Rensselaer and served several terms as county clerk. George was killed by lightning in 1863. In 1867 the family sold his farm of 933 acres to the Diocese of Fort Wayne to be used as an orphanage. That land later became the campus of Saint Joseph's College.

C. *Jasper County Poor Farm*

Before the establishment of Social Security and other social welfare programs, county poor farms provided the safety net for adults who were unable to care for themselves. Residents of these farms were expected to do whatever work they could to make the farms self sufficient. The marker that commemorates the Poor Farm overlooks county or pauper burials, many of whom died at the Poor Farm.

D. *Mary Makeever (1820-1885)*

The Makeever monument may be the most impressive in Weston Cemetery. Mary Makeever will tell the story of her husband John (1819-1910) who came to Jasper County in 1845. When he died in 1910, he was reputed to be the richest man in the County, with a net worth of half a million dollars. He built the Makeever Hotel, a three story structure that was demolished in 1962. It stood where the CVS parking lot is today. The hotel not only served travelers but also had permanent residents.

E. *Jay Dwiggins (1866-1919)*

As young men Jay and his brother Elmer moved to Chicago where Jay went to work in one of his uncle Zimri's banks. The two brothers platted the city of Griffith, Indiana and peddled its real estate, promoting Griffith as the next great factory town.

because it was at the intersection of three rail lines. The Panic of 1893 brought an end to their promotion, but Griffith still has streets named Dwiggins, Jay, and Elmer. Their next venture was a brokerage firm that went bust in 1897. Jay then turned to insurance and real estate, but found his true calling in the new movie industry. He was a character actor in about four dozen silent films before his death in California in 1919.

F. David Nowels (1821-1913)

Of the four people who first settled in what is now Rensselaer, only David Nowels is buried in Weston Cemetery. His father John is buried in the Yeoman Cemetery and his sister Sarah and her husband Joseph Yeoman are buried in Old Settlers Cemetery.

David was only 13 when he arrived at the Falls of the Iroquois in 1834. He recalled playing with Indian boys because there were no white children in the area. His early life of privation was followed by an adulthood of prosperity as he acquired significant land holdings. His descendants continue to farm land that he owned.

G. James Dean McFall (1934-1946)

Jimmy McFall drowned in 1946 while swimming in the Babcock Quarry. His tragic death spurred the citizens of Rensselaer to raise the funds to build a swimming pool in Brookside Park to prevent future deaths like that of Jimmy's.

Jimmy is buried in the lot of his grandparents. Buried nearby are ancestors of both the Eger and Duvall families, two families that were early residents of Rensselaer.

H. Thomas Kenton Parkison (1916-1943)

A grave marker that has no burial is called a cenotaph and an example is the marker for Thomas Parkison, lost at sea off the west Coast of Australia in World War Two. He was on an escort ship that ran aground on a reef during a storm. On the tour you will learn about his death and the Parkison family, one of the pioneer families of Jasper County.

Cast

Margaret Babcock Paulus	Judy Kanne
George Spitler	Phil Nagel
Poor Farm narrator	Pam Papak
Mary Makeever	Linda Buschman
Jay Dwiggins	Peter Schulenburg
David Nowels	Chris Grow
James Dean McFall	Jeremiah Huber
Thomas Kenton Parkison	Robert Pfaff

Tour Guides: Melissa Ahler, Karen Brunton, Sue Caldwell, Beverly Crynes, Peggy Gratner, Janett Kingman, Rick Odle, Kathy Parkison

Cart Drivers: Kate Kanne & Stephanie Johnson

Production

Planning, organizing, and researching: Linda Buschman, Judy Kanne, Beverly Crynes, Kevin Cochran, Ronald DeMoss, Sue Caldwell, Janett Kingman, Roger Buschman, Kelly Cochran, Robert Schenk

Thank You

Brown's Garden & Floral Shoppe, Jordan's Floral, and Willow Switch for selling tickets, staff of the Jasper County Public Library for assisting in research, Ron Cox & Jenny DeWees for preparing the Cemetery for this event. Apologies to anyone who was omitted.

Biographical Notes

Judy Kanne is the Jasper County Historian and Jasper County Historical Society Curator and former Visiting Professor in Education at SJC. • Phil Nagel has had many roles with the Carnegie Players and is a member of Iroquois Valley Harmonizers. • Pam Huffman Papak was raised in Union Township and resides on a Hoosier Homestead Farm. • Linda Buschman is Vice

President of the Jasper County Historical Society. • Peter Schulenburg is a collector of *Wizard of Oz* memorabilia and has written several children's books. • Jeremiah Huber has acted in Carnegie Players productions over the past two years. He plays the violin and piano and enjoys swimming and reading. • Chris Grow was born and raised in Rensselaer where his ancestors were the first white people to arrive in Jasper county in the 1830s. • Rob Pfaff taught chemistry and Core at SJC until its closure. An avid genealogist, he currently is President of the Indiana Sons of the American Revolution. His wife, Kathy, is Thomas Kenton Parkison's niece.

Would your business like to be a sponsor for next year's Cemetery Walk? If you are interested, contact the Jasper County Historical Society. Recognition of your sponsorship can be in next year's program.

Special thanks to the Jasper County Tourism Commission for financial support.

