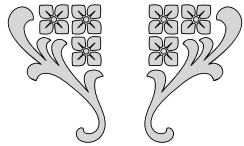


The Jasper County Historical Society  
presents the Fifth Annual

# Memories Alive

at

WESTON  
CEMETERY



September 17, 2022  
Shelter Program 11:00 am CDT  
Walking Tour 2:00 pm CDT

Walking Tour starts at the Hall Shelter in Brookside Park  
Pre-Sale Tickets: Adults \$10; Under 12 \$5  
Event-Day Tickets: Adults \$12; Under 12 \$6

## Jasper County Historical Society

The Jasper County Historical Society (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

The first burial in Weston Cemetery 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. When the city platted the cemetery in 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 has been added to numerous times through purchases or gifts to arrive at its current size. A board of trustees governed the cemetery until the 1980s at which time the board was dissolved and the City of Rensselaer assumed full responsibility of the cemetery operations.

## Two Presentations

This year's program will be confined to people buried in the middle section of Weston Cemetery. It will feature eight of the 7500+ graves in

Weston Cemetery. Costumed actors will tell the stories of the featured deceased.

There will be two presentations. A morning presentation will take place in the Hall Shelter and will not involve any walking. Anyone who cannot or does not want to walk the roughly half mile of the route should attend this presentation. The afternoon presentation will keep the format of the original Walk. Those attending will be divided into groups, with each group starting at a different station on the tour.

We hope the event will be entertaining and educational.

## Featured Decedents

A) Thomas McCoy (1805-1874) founded the bank that his son Alfred McCoy and grandson Thomas McCoy ran and that went belly up in 1904. Alfred and Thomas were among the wealthiest and most influential men in Jasper County before the bank failure. After they were pariahs. Thomas served prison time for embezzlement and his house was dynamited. The name of McCoy Ave was changed to Milroy Avenue because of the scandal. (After sitting idle for several years, the dynamited McCoy house was purchased and restored by Earle Reynolds.)

B) Pauline Mossler (1891-1903) was a granddaughter of Abraham Leopold, an influential merchant and developer in early Rensselaer. Pauline died in the tragic Iroquois Theater fire in Chicago in 1903, the deadliest one-building fire in United States history.

C) Fletcher Monnett (1838-1910) was the brother of Cordelia Monnett, who funded the Monnett School for Girls. He had considerable landholdings in Jasper County but spent many years in Evanston, Il managing a hotel that his sister Almira founded. When his sister Cordellia changed her will to leave her belongs to the Methodist Church, he contested the will and a mutual settlement was made.

D) Charlotte Hester Murray (1854-1957) was a primary school teacher before her marriage to George Murray (1857-1939), who was the owner of the Murray Department Store in Rensselaer. She was active in many civic organizations until the death of her husband, after which she moved to Indianapolis to live with her daughter. Her son, also George Murray (1896-1968) continued the family business, which closed in 1965 after 82 years in business.

E) Lillian Fendig (1913-1985) was born in London, England. During WWII she met Ralph Fendig at a hospital where she was a volunteer and he a pharmacist. After the War, she came to the United States and married Ralph. She was a talented artist and her work received statewide recognition. The art gallery at the Carnegie Center is named after her and the summer children's theater is named after her and her husband.

F) Frank E Babcock (1863-1937) was for many years the editor of the *Jasper County Democrat*, which published twice a week. He intensely disliked Abraham Halleck when Halleck was a County Commissioner. Before and after his newspaper career, he made tombstones.

G) Edward D Rhoades (1854-1933) was for many years active in Rensselaer's economic and civil life. Before he established his own hardware store, he worked for several other early Rensselaer merchants. He held several town and city offices and served a term as Postmaster. He founded the Rensselaer Fire Department and organized the improvement of Weston Cemetery.

H) Bessie Tillman (1885-1913) was the first librarian for Rensselaer's new Carnegie Library. She left Rensselaer in 1910 when her husband got a job teaching in Lebanon and then moved to Hammond when her husband got a job there. She was killed in Hammond by a runaway team of horses. One newspaper account says that she saved two young children from the horses.

## Cast

Thomas McCoy	Sean Egan
Pauline Mossler	Nella Lakin
Fletcher Monnett	Jay Covill
Charlotte Murray	Terra Neidigh
Lillian Fendig	Susie Rayburn
Frank Babcock	John Waymire
Edward Rhoades	Dan Hawthorne
Bessie Tillman	Elizabeth Gray

Tour Guides: Judy Kanne, Kayla De Jong,, Beverly Crynes, Melissa Ahler, Kerry Kingman, Jamett Kingman, Nancy Studer, Kristi Slaby

Planning, organizing, researching, etc.: Linda Buschman, Judy Kanne, Beverly Crynes, Kevin Cochran, Tony Baltes and Cemetery Staff, Janett Kingman, Roger Buschman, Robert Schenk, Melissa Smith, Joan Lindstrom, Rob Pfaff, Janelle Musch, Willow Switch, Brown's Garden and Floral, Joseph Effinger, Heather Heinig, Kenny Haun, Cassius and Caulden Pulver, and Lindsey Preston. Apologies to those who were omitted.

Mark Heinig is our videographer. We expect that a video of the Walk will be available in the near future. Rensselaer Printco printed the tickets and the program.

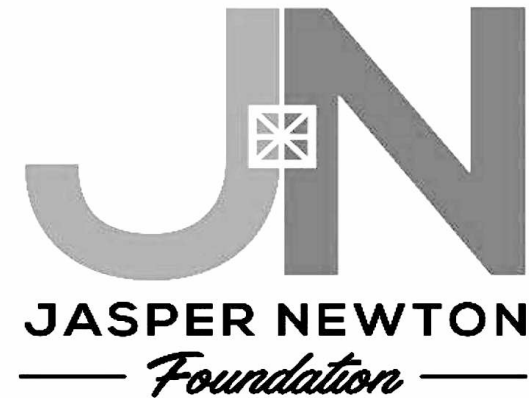
## Biographical Notes

Sean Egan is a Rensselaer native who has travelled the world, only to find himself living back in Northwest Indiana where he runs a school.

- Nella Lakin is a fifth grade student at Van Rensselaer School. This past summer she performed in the Fendig Children's Summer Theater for the first time
- Jay Covill, a resident of Rensselaer since 1992, is a former food service director at the Hospital.
- Terra Neidigh moved from Iowa with her husband and two boys in 2020. An avid fiction writer/storyteller, she works at Van Rensselaer.
- Susie Rayburn, lifelong resident of Rensselaer, teaches 8th and 9th grade English at

Tri-County and is a lover of all things theatrical. • Born and raised in Rensselaer and a graduate of Saint Joseph's College, John Waymire is a retired elementary school teacher and principal who currently supervises student teachers for the University of Phoenix. • Dan Hawthorn teaches social studies at Rensselaer Central High School • Elizabeth Gray directed the 2019 production of the Carnegie Players *Drowsy Chaperone*. She is employed at Purdue University's School of Engineering.

**Special thanks to the Jasper Newton Foundation and the Jasper County Tourism Commission for financial support.**



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& Rhonda Woolley Parker



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