

PULASKI COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Preserving history for a better future.

ANNUAL PROGRAM & MEETING

Wednesday, March 18, 7:00 PM

PJ Gilsinger Museum, Pulaski

Meet & Greet with Light Refreshments at 6:30 PM

Annually, the Pulaski County Historical Society meets to organize for the upcoming year and to provide a program of historic interest to the community.

This year, the program will be provided by Paul and Brenda Gilsinger, owners of PJ Gilsinger & Co., a museum dedicated to their John Deere business and heritage in Pulaski County. The museum opened its doors to the community in 2018 and features items from the family's John Deere business.

Brenda Gilsinger has done an extensive amount of research into her family's ancestry an history and in the history of local towns and institutions. We sincerely hope that residents of the area and members of local churches plan to attend.

Also, we may hear something about her family's history, which, coincidentally, dovetails with the history of this newsletter's editor. (!)

You'll be across the street from Bill & Babes, a Pulaski institution since 1954. Stop for supper before, or visit after. We understand the owners of the museum do not care if you bring food in from the bar during the program, but we will also

provide light refreshments.

Join us on March 18 and step back in time to a long-ago way of life.



SLATE OF OFFICERS

& DIRECTORS

President

Ryan Harrison

Vice-President

Kathi Thompson

Secretary

Janet Onken

Treasurer

Lin Morrison

Curator

Dr. Natalie Federer

Director Term '21

Ryan Crawford

Directors Term '23

Mary Conner

Becky Dilts

Steve Morrison

FUND RAISING INITIATIVE



We are raising funds to repair the west wall of the Vurpillat Opera House! We plan to submit a grant request to OCRA (Office of Community and Rural Affairs) with the State of Indiana in their next cycle (this spring/summer). We received a significant contribution from the Community Foundation of Pulaski County. If you want to be a part of the "Members & Friends" campaign, please fill out this form and submit it by April 1, 2020. AND THANK YOU!

Donation Pledge Form

The Historical Society must reach a 50% match requirement before a grant application can be made to the State to (a) repair the west side exterior of the Opera House and (b) replace the main entry doors to the Opera House. We received significant funding from the Community Foundation of Pulaski County, but we still need funds. Any assistance you can provide to help us maintain this beautiful building and to enhance the look of "downtown" would be appreciated. We missed the first cycle and are hopeful we can make the second. We cannot send this grant application in until we have secured the funds or the promise of funds. Please return this to us by no later than April 1, 2020, and Thank You!

Donor Information (please print or type)

Name: _____

Billing Address: _____

City, State, Zip: _____

Phone 1: _____ Phone 2: _____

Email: _____

Pledge Information

I (we) pledge a total of \$_____ to be paid Now By 03/30/2020 By 06/30/2020

I (we) plan to make this contribution in the form of Cash Check Credit Card

Credit Card Information

Type: VISA MasterCard Exp Date: _____ Card Number: _____

Authorized signature: _____

(The Historical Society does not have a credit card account. The receipt will say Tiger Lily's Café)

Gift will be matched by: Company Family Foundation

(Please forward a form to the appropriate donor, or give us the appropriate information to do so.)

Acknowledgement Information

Please use the following name(s) in all acknowledgements: _____

I (we) wish to have the gift remain anonymous.

Authorization

Signature: _____ Date: _____

Payment Information

Please make checks, corporate matches or other gifts payable to: Pulaski County Historical Society.

Pledge forms and checks can be mailed to the Historical Society at PO Box 135, Winamac IN 46996.

Pledge forms can also be emailed to Kathi Thompson at kathi@pwrhc.com. For additional information, call Kathi at (574) 270-0128.

PAUL'S CHAPEL CHURCH CEMETERY



Paul's Chapel cemetery can be found at the intersection of Pulaski County roads 600W and 650S in Beaver Township. In 1896, Mary L. and husband Henry R. Paul deeded 1 acre for a church and cemetery to the Trustees of the Church of God. The church building was dedicated on Sunday the 17th of October 1897.

The tombstones of the first known burials in this cemetery are side by side: Isaac Wood and Mary Paul. Isaac M. Wood enlisted in Ohio to serve in the Civil War. Later, he and his wife Julia moved to Pulaski County and lived in Van Buren and Beaver townships many years prior to Isaac's death in February 1898.



The 2nd known burial is that of Mary L. Paul herself. Mary and Henry Paul, originally from Pennsylvania, had lived in Beaver Township many years prior to the death of Mary in November 1898. A newspaper account says it was the largest funeral ever seen in Beaver Township.

In 1958 Gale and Alma Good donated a strip of land on the west side of the original cemetery to enlarge the Paul's Chapel burial ground.

This small country cemetery is a place of peace and rest for many of the neighborhood families.

Submitted by Janet Onken

PEARSON ICEHOUSE

The Pearson icehouse, just across the river near the east end of the bridge, burned early Sunday morning. It had been an icehouse a score of years or more, but had been kept in good shape. It was 26x90x16 feet, and its double walls contained a lot of lumber. If there is a good ice crop next winter, Mr. Pearson will probably rebuild on the strip of land he bought from Lew Schriener lying along the river and running northeast to near where the Kewanna road branches off.

Abstracted from *Pulaski County Democrat* 20 June 1907

Submitted by Janet Onken

THE BRIDGE THAT COULDN'T



White Post Township bridge fails to support the little engine that pulls gravel trains from gravel pits to road construction sites. Pulaski County, Indiana (date unknown)

REMEMBERING AN IRAN HOSTAGE: FRANCESVILLE’S RICK KUPKE

By Karen Clem Fritz, Pulaski County Historian

Forty years ago, student militants in Iran captured 66 American citizens at the U.S. embassy in Tehran and held 52 of them hostage for 444 days. The event became an international crisis and took place during the chaotic aftermath of Iran’s Islamic revolution (1978-79).

The U.S. and Iran have tap-danced through dozens of tricky skirmishes in the last 70 years and more. But the 1979-81 hostage crisis in Iran also struck home in Pulaski County.

That’s because among the 52 hostages was Frederick “Rick” Kupke of rural Francesville, then a 32-year-old communications officer and electronics specialist with the U.S. State Department, assigned to the embassy in Tehran.

Over the years, Kupke has shared some of his hostage experience in various news reports. Ten years ago he told a Fort Worth, Texas newspaper that on that fateful day on Nov. 4, 1979, he was busy encrypting classified messages at the Tehran embassy when a U.S. Marine Corps guard yelled over the radio that the Iranian students were coming over the embassy wall. Kupke was instructed to send a telegram to the state department in Washington to alert them to the situation.

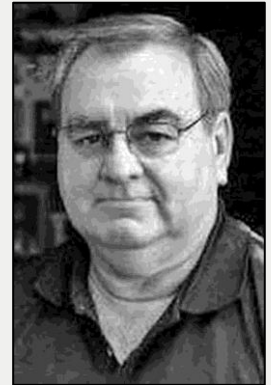
Kupke told the Texas newspaper he was then ordered to shred sensitive government documents, especially papers and cables related to the unpopular Shah Mohammad Reza Pahlavi, the U.S.-backed, deposed Iranian leader who had fled to the U.S. earlier that year. After next destroying his communications equipment, Kupke made his way to the embassy roof, and became the final American hostage taken that day. *(Portions of these efforts by Kupke were portrayed in a scene of the 2012 Academy award-winning movie “Argo.”)*

The student militants demanded the return of the Shah for the release of the hostages.

Meanwhile, back home, word of their son’s capture soon reached his parents, Arthur and Eleanor Kupke, along with friends and family in their Jasper/Pulaski neighborhood. The 15 months of anxious worry and waiting had begun.

Kupke was born Jan. 10, 1947 in Rensselaer and grew up on his family’s farm located just west of Francesville. He attended Gillam Elementary School and graduated from Rensselaer High School. He then studied political science and history at Cameron University in Oklahoma, and served in the U.S. Air Force with tours of duty in Turkey, Japan and Italy, working in electronic intelligence gathering. He joined the state department in 1975 and was assigned to Thailand and later the Sinai Field Mission in the Middle East. Kupke’s assignment to Tehran began in August 1979. (He had actually agreed to take the assignment on behalf of his roommate who had a wife and children at home and was reluctant to go to Tehran.)

(Continued on Page 5)



Rick Kupke, 62, at home in Texas during a 2009 interview. (Fort Worth Star-Telegram photo)



Rick Kupke (center) is welcomed home to the Hoosier state on Jan. 28, 1981, by Gov. Robert Orr at a reception at the Indianapolis airport. Kupke, 34, of Francesville was one of 52 American citizens held hostage in Iran during the 1979-81 hostage crisis. (History IT photo)



A new footrace, the "Yellow Ribbon Run," was dedicated to Rick Kupke at the 1980 Francesville Fall Festival. Standing for the national anthem before the race were special guests (l-r) U.S. Deputy Secretary of State Brian Atwood, Congressman Floyd Fithian, and Kupke's parents Arthur and Eleanor Kupke of rural Francesville. (Pulaski County Journal photo)

Arthur and Eleanor Kupke modestly declined most requests to speak to the media during their son's captivity, largely from fear of doing or saying anything that might possibly harm Rick.

For Christmas 1979, the students and staff at Gillam Elementary (part of the West Central Schools) mailed over 50 cards and messages to Kupke, wishing him a merry Christmas and expressing hope for his safe return home. In the coming months, the students decorated the school yard with yellow ribbons around the trees. As the year progressed, the neighboring communities followed suit. Yellow ribbons could be seen everywhere.

In January 1980, Eleanor Kupke wrote a letter to the Pulaski County *Journal* to express the family's gratitude for the "deep interest and concern for Rick" shown by the county community. "We are thinking of Rick almost constantly, as well as all the hostages and their families," she added, and admitted there was "great sorrow within our hearts and we are inclined to have negative thoughts sometimes." But she concluded that for all the uncertain feelings and discomfort of the difficult situation, their "thoughts still ring with optimism."

As an aside, it should be noted that the three-month Ford Pinto Trial began in January 1980 in Winamac, with media from across the nation in town to cover it. At the same time, the journalists from the national newspapers and television networks were constantly in touch with their editors and producers back in New York and Washington to keep updated on other breaking news items. Events in Iran were among the top stories they followed.

The 1980 Francesville Fall Festival was dedicated to Rick Kupke. A special guest in attendance was U.S. Deputy Secretary of State Brian Atwood. "As long as anyone is held hostage in the embassy or in Iran, the entire country is held hostage," Atwood told the gathered crowd. Atwood praised the Kupke family for their "courage and determination" throughout the ordeal. "We wait with patience and fortitude. I urge you not to lose faith. As difficult as it is, be patient. We will win out. We all know there is courage in restraint."

In fact, the dynamics of the crisis had begun to shift two months earlier with the death of the Shah from cancer while in exile in Egypt. Months later, following negotiations mediated by Algeria, the U.S. hostages were released, just minutes after Ronald Reagan was sworn in as president on Jan. 20, 1981. U.S. officials had agreed to release almost \$8 billion in frozen Iranian assets for the exchange.

At 2 a.m., Wednesday, Jan. 21, Arthur Kupke received the phone call he had been awaiting for 444 agonizing days. It was from Rick in Germany. He said he was fine. And happy.

Upon their release, the hostages were immediately flown to Germany, where they met Jimmy Carter and other officials and were evaluated by doctors and psychiatrists before leaving for home. Kupke attended a reception at the White House, and then flew to Indianapolis, accompanied by his parents. At the state capital he was met by Gov. Robert Orr and attended a brief reception at the airport. From there the Kupkes, along with some other family members, boarded a motorhome and headed up I-65 to Rensselaer, escorted by the state police and helicopters with the media. A stop was made at the Jasper County courthouse only long enough for the former hostage to wave his thanks. Then the family headed for the privacy of their farm home. (Continued on Page 6)

But at about 2 p.m., word began to circulate in Francesville that Kupke would visit the town. And thus, hundreds of Francesville area residents quickly assembled and had their opportunity to wave yellow ribbons and American flags. Wearing a yellow sweater and nursing a sore throat, Kupke leaned out of his motor home window in the January air to wave and smile at the enthusiastic crowd. The motorcade made two passes through town and Kupke's presence appeared to satisfy a need of the crowd - perhaps not even fully understood by the residents themselves - to see that Kupke was safe and well.

Kupke did not tarry long at the home farm. He was among the first of the hostages to return to the state department, completing assignments in Thailand, Sri Lanka, the Philippines, Costa Rica, Jamaica and Mexico. He married and had two sons, but later divorced, becoming a single father. He retired from foreign service in 1997, and eventually returned to Rensselaer where his sons attended high school. His mother died in 1992, and his father in 1998. Kupke, now 73, later moved to Arlington, Texas.

*O*n the various anniversaries of the 1979 Iran Hostage Crisis, the former hostages, including Kupke, have shared with media outlets across the country the experiences of their 15-month captivity. Their accounts include stories of torture, beatings, threats and intimidation.

But once released, Kupke was determined not to worry or be traumatized by the experience for the rest of his life. In 2004 he told the Lafayette Journal & Courier, "I think about it as history now. I just happened to be there when it happened. I never wanted to make more of it than what it was."

Bibliography: pbs.org, Lafayette Journal & Courier, Fort Worth Star-Telegram, The Hound's Tale Newsletter (Texas), Library of Congress Veterans History Project, History IT, Pulaski County Journal, Pulaski County Public Library

PULASKI COUNTY HISTORICAL MUSEUM

SCHEDULE A TOUR

Contact us to host a meeting, a program, a special program, a tour... Use your imagination!

We'll work with you on dates and times.

VOLUNTEER DOCENT TRAINING

THURSDAY, APRIL 15, 5:00 PM

Interested in becoming a volunteer docent for our museum?

Fill out and return our application by April 1 to be invited to our Docent Training.

OUR MUSEUM WILL BE CLOSED STARTING

MAY 16

WE REOPEN JUNE 6

During that time, we will rotate exhibits. Stay tuned to this newsletter and to Facebook for what's to come!

IN THE MEANTIME, VISIT US!

These exhibits will rotate out. Come see them before they're gone!

- Tom Jones Photography
- Native American Artifacts / The Mastodon
- Star City History
- World War I History

THE MUSEUM IS OPEN!

Saturdays 12:00 - 4:00 EST

500 South Monticello

Winamac, Indiana

The Carriage House



REMINISCENCES OF E. R. BROWN

Pulaski County Pioneer 1845 - 1930 (Part 4)

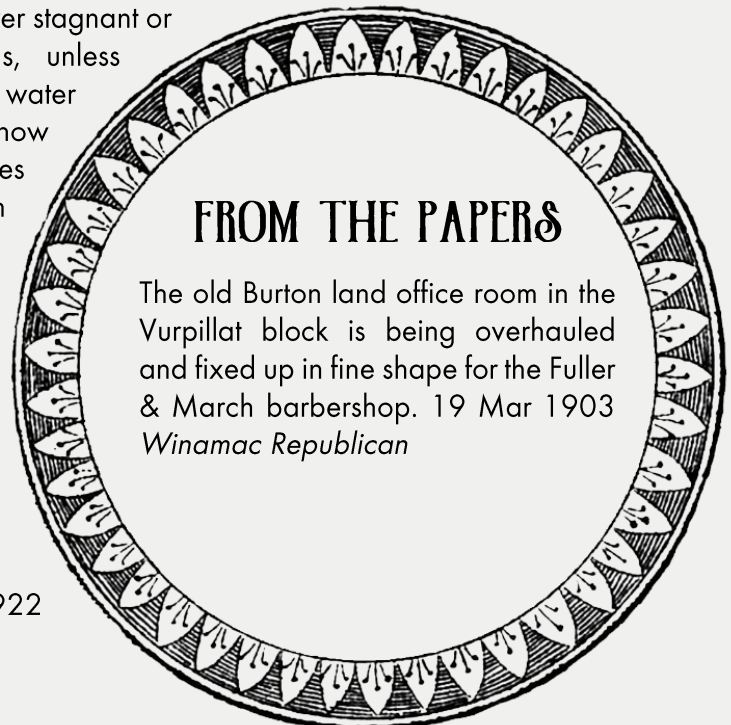
The Tippecanoe River

Of respectable size and clear-flowing, this river, which enters the county near its northeast corner but after a while turns and goes out again, only to change its mind a second time, to come back and meander diagonally clear across the county, has, from the first coming of the white people been heralded as very attractive. The Indian's more permanent camps were located near it, while their well-worn trails; their rounded out rock-lined sweating places, and some of the graves where they had buried their dead on its banks, were still plainly in evidence when I was a boy. Even the Mound Builders seem to have been partial to our beautiful stream. Their numerous 'mounds' were much more distinct and prominent seventy years ago than now.

Curiously there was far less driftwood in the river formerly than now. This is in part hard to account for, but is unquestionably true. That logs cut for some purpose and used for a while should now encumber the river might be expected. But, that so many more limbs and the uprooted or broken off bodies of young trees should be in it now than at any earlier period is not easily explained. There was evidently more timber along the river in early days than at any subsequent time, yet at that time there was not only less driftwood everywhere but almost none of it was to be found when the water was deep. I was almost in my teens when those using seines to catch fish first began to complain of snags in the 'deep holes', as they were called. At first they were not troubled by them, but they continued to increase, so that long before seining was prohibited by law, sunken timber and brush had come to be very annoying.

It seems to me also that the water in the river was clearer than now. I knew an early instance of a small flask falling out of a man's pocket into water which was measured and found to be fifteen feet deep. It was easily seen at that depth. However, if what everybody says is true, the Tippecanoe must still be an attractive stream, for practically all who ever see it cordially unite in saying it is. Of the river itself it is a common observation that of all who have been much accustomed to looking at it, few ever separate themselves permanently from it. It certainly does not suffer in comparison with other streams, no matter where or what their attractions.

The old Tippecanoe, never very muddy or unsightly, never stagnant or miasmatic, seldom treacherous or very dangerous, unless rendered so by the agency of men; her clear, pure water forever flows in a liberal, silvery, bewitching stream—now rippling or gurgling over pebbles or among larger stones or slight riffles, now moving with stronger more even current down some long gentle slope and now adapting itself to the conditions of a deep, quiet pool. The vision of this delightful river; passing through our county, forever flowing between attractive shores and bluffs, with their succession of graceful bends and curves, overgrown and adorned so generally with a wealth of trees, grasses and flowers, can never be effaced, or dimmed in the mind and heart of one who has now cherished it so long.



Abstracted from *Pulaski County Democrat* 02 March 1922
Submitted by Janet Onken

PULASKI COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

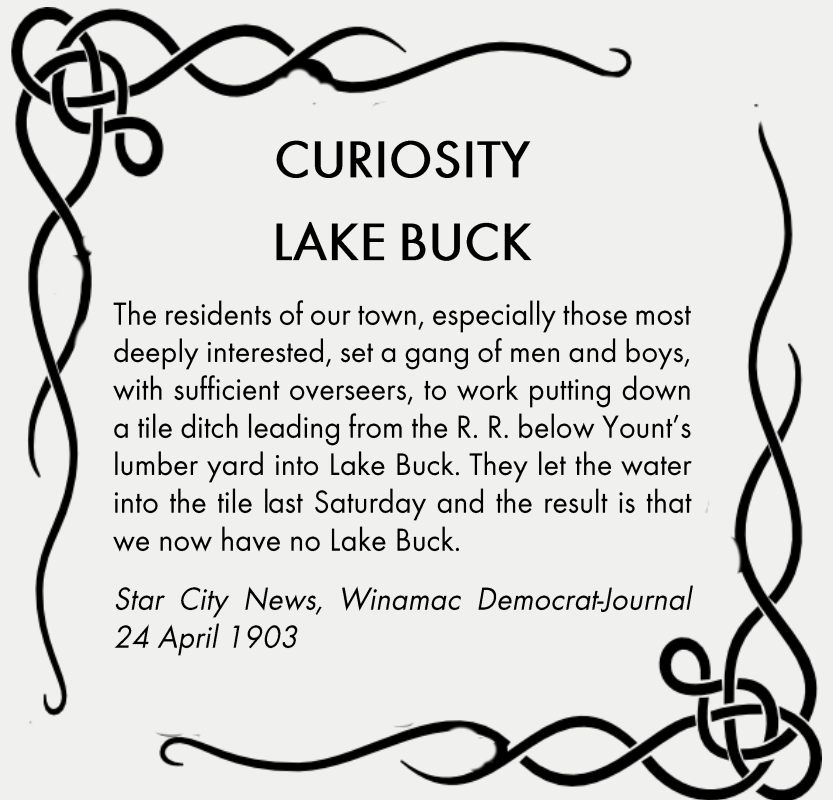
PO Box 135, Winamac IN 46996
info@pulaskihistory.net
www.pulaskihistory.net
www.Facebook.com/PulaskiHistory

Officers

President: Ryan Harrison
Vice President: Kathi Thompson
Secretary: Janet Onken (also Genealogist)
Treasurer: Lin Morrison
Curator: Natalie Federer
Past President: Kathi Thompson

Board Members

Term Ending 2020: Mary Conner, Ryan Crawford, Becky Dilts
Term Ending 2021: Brian Capouch, Louise Gudas, Mike Shurn
Term Ending 2022: Raye Anne Absher, Sara Kroft, Jolie Simmermaker
Ex-Officio: Karen Fritz, County Historian




CURIOSITY LAKE BUCK


The residents of our town, especially those most deeply interested, set a gang of men and boys, with sufficient overseers, to work putting down a tile ditch leading from the R. R. below Yount's lumber yard into Lake Buck. They let the water into the tile last Saturday and the result is that we now have no Lake Buck.

*Star City News, Winamac Democrat-Journal
24 April 1903*

Ask The Historian!
Pulaski County Historian Karen Fritz
Pulaski County Public Library
(Winamac)
2nd Tuesdays 1:00 - 3:00



Ask The Genealogist!
Pulaski County Genealogist Janet Onken
Pulaski County Public Library
(Winamac)
every Monday 4:00 - 6:00



MEMBERSHIP

- \$30 Individual
- \$40 Family
- \$80 Sustaining

2019 was a great year for us. The Historical Society Museum is open, and we continue to seek new volunteers. Become a member and see how you can become involved.

Membership information can be found on the website: www.pulaskihistory.net.

Pulaski County Historical Society
PO Box 135
Winamac IN 46996