

# Portage Community Historical Society News

## CHRISTMAS ON THE FARM

President—Valeria Roach  
 Vice President—Anne Koehler  
 Secretary—Donna Smith  
 Treasurer— Barb Borg-Jenkins  
 Board of Directors:  
 Patti Coppess  
 Sue Cowsert  
 Jim Franzen  
 Al Goin  
 Lois Mollick  
 Wanda Samuelson  
 Richard Turnak  
 Eva Udick

**Saturday, December 6 - 10 am - 4 pm**

**Sunday, December 7 - 1 - 4 pm**

**Father Christmas and Mrs. Claus**

**Bring your camera for pictures with Santa**

**Refreshments**

**Activities for the kids**

**Quilt & pillowcase doll raffle**

**Portage Community Historical Society**

**Alton Goin Museum decorated for Christmas**

**Tours of the Trager Farmhouse and Barn**

*Check for updates on our websites:*

[www.inpchs.com](http://www.inpchs.com)

[www.facebook.com/pchs88](http://www.facebook.com/pchs88)

Countryside Park

5250 US Highway 6; Portage, IN 46368

219-762-8349

[portagehistorical@gmail.com](mailto:portagehistorical@gmail.com)

We need volunteers to help cover the 3 buildings and if you'd like to donate cookies and finger foods to help with the refreshments. Contact Lois if you can help for an hour or two.

**Are you a US military veteran?**

We would like to borrow a picture of you in uniform for the "Military Tree." Debbie Parker is working on the project. With the photo include full name, rank, years of service and branch.

Email it, Facebook private message or drop it off at the museum; include a return address so the photo may be returned.

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### INSTALLATION DINNER

Debbie Parker added to and improved the Power-Point Presentation slide show we are presenting at the dinner. She recently completed two Photoshop classes and you can tell by the beautiful graphics she puts on our Facebook site.

From Nativity of Our Savior Prayer Shawl Ministry we received a beautiful quilt and pillowcase doll for our raffle this year. The tickets are \$1.00 each or 6 for \$5.00. We will be selling tickets at the November dinner until the December Open House. The drawing will be on Sunday December 7 about 3:00 pm.



## MUSEUM NEWS

Did you, your parents or maybe your grandparents attend one of the Portage Township schools in the 1920's and early 1930's? We have received all the school ledgers from the Portage Schools Media Center. We have been indexing them because they are so fragile we can't handle them any more than necessary. We hope to scan them soon. If you'd like to check the index for family names and then look at the school records, we are usually working in the museum on Friday mornings. Contact us at the museum for an appointment so we can have the correct ledgers ready for you.

Each journal is indexed by the names of the child and parent if listed. A name may appear more than once in a ledger but we just list them once. Spellings for some families differ so check all spellings. When I figure out how to do it, I will add the index to our new website. We already have thousands of names and we are not half done.

The museum closes for the winter but we plan to continue working there at least on Fridays. We want to make a few small changes before the spring open house.

Like to paint and can climb a ladder? We have 2 more walls that we'd like to have painted this winter.

We will need more volunteers for the museums next spring. If you can cover a Saturday or Sunday once a month or even just when we have an 5th weekend, please let us know. We are stretched pretty thin and need a few more volunteers. Contact Kathy or Lois.



New accession over 50 years old: Al Goin heard from Roger Ackley son of Maynard Ackley. Old timers will remember Maynard had a gas station in early Portage. He also was a volunteer on the first Portage Fire Department in the 1950's. Here's the email Roger sent when I asked for the history of the bell as he knows it.

### FIRE TRUCK BELL

This bell was removed from the parade truck when Dad retired from the fire department. The bell was given to Dad in a box that was made of plywood and it had an engraved plaque glued onto the bell. Well in the 50+ years the box broke down, and the engraved plaque is long gone and I do not know where it went.

I moved away from Portage in 1967. I can not remember when the Volunteer FD was disbanded or when Dad stepped down as Chief but as a token of their appreciation for his many years in the FD from its start through becoming Chief, the bell was presented to Dad at that time.

Dad had talked about making into a dinner bell but it is so loud the whole neighborhood would have been alerted so it never matured as a dinner bell.

Dad Moved to Ft. Myers where the bell rested for many years, and was shown to many of his friends in Florida. Dad is buried in Fort Myers along with my mom Billie Ackley who was active in the FD Ladies Auxiliary.

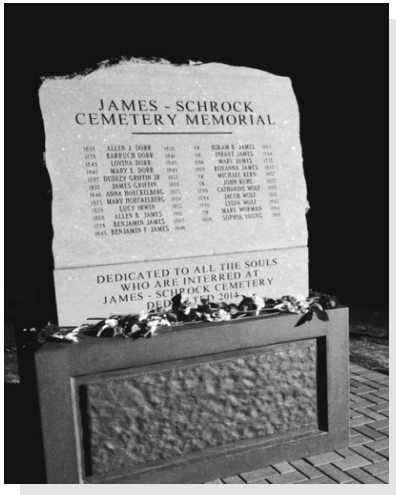
When Dad passed away in 2010 I brought the bell home with me. I live in Ocala, FL. I made the stand that it is currently mounted on and felt that the best place for this bell was back in Portage where the fire truck it was originally installed on was resting. I noticed that the original mount is no longer on the truck so display it as you please.

Ring the bell often and I am sure that Dad will hear it ringing as it is quite loud.

Had a great time being back in Portage this weekend first time back in 25 years

Roger Ackley

## JAMES – SCHROCK CEMETERY MEMORIAL



**Memorial Dedication Oct. 30, 2014**

**Monument measures 4'6" wide and 8'6" high including the base with a 34 foot brick walkway**

*Monument was designed by Grant Street Monuments, Gary, IN made of Rustic Mahogany—from a Granite Quarry in Milbank, South Dakota, USA*

*Installation of the foundation and base was by The Ross Group, Inc. of Portage, IN*

*Allen's Lawn Care, Portage IN designed and installed the brick pavers, fence and mosaic stones*

*All this was completed under the supervision of Brendan Clancy, Portage Township Trustee, Terry Whitten, Advisory Board of Portage Township Cemetery Liaison, Debbie Clem, Director of Cemeteries, Portage Township and Kathy Heckman—Portage Community Historical Society representative*

On Thursday, Oct. 30, about 40 people gathered at McCool Cemetery to dedicate the new memorial and the broken fragments of the James-Schrock Cemetery.

Speakers talked about the history of the pioneer cemetery and Father Andrew Corona from Nativity Church, blessed and dedicated the site.

We have so many people to thank from the Township Trustee Brendan Clancy and Debbie Clem and her McCool Cemetery workers, Allen & Shay Welp of Allen's Lawn Care for the design and work on the mosaic and to Jan at Grant Street Monuments.

It was a little over 6 years ago that the trustee, Joyce Webster, was made aware of the cemetery by the Portage Community Historical Society. In 2008, the historical society submitted the paperwork to have James Cemetery listed in the registry of the Department of Natural Resources of Indiana Cemeteries and Burial Grounds.

It seems the cemetery has gotten lost and forgotten over the years. I have some newspaper articles given to us from Al Goin.

Al enlisted the PHS J.R.O.T.C. to clean out the brush and take out an old fence. He also had the Bricklayers Local 4 apprentice program to construct the entrance pillars. Even at that time the vandals did so much destruction to the gravestones.

In the spring of 1991 LuAnn Connors and Donna McCormick attempted to read the cemetery gravestones for the Northwest Indiana Genealogy Society, but they had to refer to a previous reading because of so much damage.

August 2, 1973 The Post Tribune carried a two page article entitled "Township's lost cemetery: Found" At that time Trustee John Williams attempted to have the cemetery cleaned up only to have more vandalism. At that time pictures were taken of some of the intact gravestones of Jacob Wolf and Benjamin James, two pioneers to Portage Township.

June 1936 in the History of Portage Township

found at the library, it is mentioned that Schrock Cemetery is classed as one of the earlier graveyards of Portage Township. It was founded in 1836 by an unknown person. We now know that Mr. Benjamin James owned the land and his wife, Mary (Brown) James, was the first burial in the James Cemetery. The Schrock's didn't own the land until sometime after 1880 when all the James family were either deceased or left the area. It is believed that the Schrock family did not use the James Cemetery on their land. They are known to be buried in McCool Cemetery.

From various sources we attempted to identify as many burials we could prove in James Cemetery. When the cemetery crew dug up and transported every grave-stone piece they found, they uncovered the memorial for Allen B. and Roxanne (Griffin) James.

After cleaning the small grave stone of Dudley and Roxanne Wise we were able to read it and their names will be added to the memorial. They were the young children of William & Mary Emeline (James) Wise and grandchildren to the aforementioned Allen B. & Roxanne (Griffin) James all pioneer settlers.

More information can be found in the McCool Cemetery office and history of the Portage Township cemeteries and family genealogies can be found at the Alton Goin Museum.



We are on the web  
<http://www.inpchs.com>



PORTAGE  
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INC.

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Memberships: Single \$20,  
Family \$50, Business \$60 and  
Lifetime \$100

## ***Christmas on the Farm***

**Saturday, December 6 - 10 am - 4 pm**

**Sunday, December 7 - 1 - 4 pm**

**Father Christmas and Mrs. Claus**

**Bring your camera for pictures with Santa**

**Cookies and Punch**

**Children's Crafts**

**Christmas Music**

**Portage Community Historical Society  
Alton Goin Museum decorated for Christmas  
Tours of the Trager Farmhouse and Barn**

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## CALENDAR OF UPCOMING EVENTS

**November 19, 2014, Wednesday**—Installation Dinner, 6:00 pm Woodland Park

**December 6 & 7, 2014 Saturday & Sunday**— Christmas Open House, Museums at Countryside Park

The museum will close after the open house and reopen the first weekend of April 2015.

**April 4 & 5, 2015**— Opening weekend

**Saturday, April 4, 2015**, Spring Tea at the museum—watch for more details

The Portage Community Historical Society is proud to announce the launch of our new Website. The new website combines new technology which allows us to publish to Facebook & Twitter when we publish an article to our website. We have many photos and articles on the website and will continue to add more as time goes on.

This new website was donated by Ronald Garrison and Bad Dog Web Hosting. Ron, Debbie Parker and Stephanie Gabbert designed the site and graphics. Photos and information were used from our previous website which was created by Donna Smith; please take a look at the site today and let us know what you think.

**[www.inpchs.com](http://www.inpchs.com)**

*Wolf Mansion Tours*

*by appointment*

*contact Lynda &*

*Clement Khan at*

*219-364-8102*

*or*

*[Khanlegal@aol.com](mailto:Khanlegal@aol.com)*