

The Crawford Countian



Summer 2022

Welcome to the summer edition of The Crawford Countian! With this issue, I decided to continue the information on the English Christian Church. We had Mike Gillespie at our June meeting and he shared his experiences as pastor of the former church. He handed out a chapter from his memoirs ("The Hoodlum Priest") that told of some experiences and I have reprinted a few of those sections in this issue. Also, please note, if you have not renewed your membership, this will be the last issue you receive. The membership dues help pay for our expenses and to be honest, our donations / sales of the past year have been very low compared to year's past. In order to stay operative, we need support, so every little bit helps! Without support, there is no historical society.

-William Piper, President of CCHGS
billgpiper@hotmail.com



Cover photo: artwork of the English Christian Church by Leona Wiseman

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Mike Gillespie's English Christian Church memories

At our June 2022 meeting, Mike spoke about his time as the pastor of the English Christian Church. With him, he brought copies from his memoirs, as well as some paintings that are currently stored at the Hillview Christian church (between Marengo and English). The painting featured above was painted by Leona Wiseman. I'll feature a few more paintings throughout this article. Here are a few excerpts from Mike's writings....

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The weather on the weekends in January and February of 1972 wrought havoc on our church attendances. It seemed that nearly every Sunday was bitterly cold, or almost so, and it was quite uncomfortable in that old church building, even with the thermostat turned way up and the blower running wide open. The standing operating procedure was to cancel services if the outside temperature sank below fifteen degrees, and it was easy to understand why. There was not a shred of insulation in the eighty-eight year old structure, and even in the three rooms of the "new addition" across the back, there was little that could be found. To be honest, on that July Sunday of 1971 when I preached my trial sermon, as I stood preaching in the pulpit, I could see daylight AROUND the window frames and sashes and I wondered about this very thing - how do they heat this place in the wintertime? You might be surprised by what passes through the "back channels"

of a preacher's mind when he's delivering his sermon. On that July Sunday morning and those additional Sunday mornings in January and February of 1972 with outdoor temps in the low teens, my "back channel" was abuzz: "how can I move this congregation toward a building program? This is ridiculous!"

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Painting by E.C. Roberts, of early incarnation of the English Christian Church

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Someone in the realm of youth ministry originated "The World's Biggest Banana Split" craze, in the hopes of gaining a listing in the Guinness Book of World Records. Of course, the primary purpose was to attract more kids to a church's youth program. We heard stories and saw pictures of five-hundred-foot long sections of rain gutter stretched across church parking lots or down streets or through church buildings, and concluded that we liked ice cream, too, and that we should give it a try. The best we could manage was a huge elongated kitchen dishpan that we crammed full of Neapolitan ice cream and all the toppings we could find at the local JayC grocery. It didn't come close to those hundreds of feet of guttering that some churches could claim, but I'm reasonably sure we created the LARGEST BANANA SPLIT seen in Crawford County, Indiana - at least on that day!



ENGLISH CHRISTIAN CHURCH 1933 - 1975

E.C. Roberts

Every community - large or small - has its share of characters, and English, Indiana, was NO different. During the first warm spell of early Spring, 1972, I stepped out of Gilliland's Barber Shop after a visit with Bob (my first haircut since my lawn-mower purchase deal), and heard the barking of a riding lawnmower with no muffler very close by. The parking spaces were filled with cars, but looking through and around them, I could see the curious sight of a guy riding that muffler-less machine down the middle of Main Street in the face of oncoming traffic! I just had to step back into the barber shop and ask Bob, who was also a member of the Town Council, what on earth was going on. "Oh", he said, "That's just old Emory coming to town. He had his license suspended back in the winter after another DUI episode, and this is how he gets around now."

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Easter Sunday is always "Special", and in 1975, it was especially so: services that day were the last "normal" church services in English Christian's sagging old building. From that day on, we were busy removing and storing any usable fixtures and equipment, preparing for the structure's impending demolition, and making arrangements for an alternate site at which to worship. The final worship service was conducted on the second Sunday in June, and the following morning, local bulldozer operator George Novak brought his biggest dozer and "dropped" it all into the basement. At five o'clock that hot Monday afternoon, the huge pile of broken wood and shattered plaster was

set ablaze and the first swirl of smoke blew into the plastic-curtained open windows of an old rooming house across the street. The tenant came running out yelling, "I'm gonna sue! I'm gonna sue! Ya done smoked my curtains!" He evidently forgot about a lawsuit when he woke up sober the next morning.

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A big thanks to Mike for his visit to our June meeting, for sharing his memoirs and also bringing the paintings to show. He expressed wishes to see the paintings that the Hillview Church has of the English Christian Church to be gifted to the historical society as "historical pieces" for public display. I have contacted one of the pastors at the church, but was told he needed to speak to his elders regarding it and that was the last I heard from him (over a month ago). If any member of the CCHGS is a member of that church, put in a good word for us! I would sure like to see the paintings on display at our HQ building in English.

-bP

Mighty Close to Heaven

By J. W. Patton

If you want to live near heaven
Just as close as you can get
I'm persuaded to remind ya,
Just in case ya should forget
Of a place called Crawford County
Restin' snugly mong the hills
If you'll visit in the autumn
Will completely fill the bill
Now I ain't no hand at braggin
Course I might stretch thing a mite
When I tell ya here in Crawford
Everything's exactly right;
An I'd surely like to prove it
So I'm askin each of you
That you bring the wife and kiddies,
And come down a week or two
Here the birds do their rehearsin
As they learn their newest songs
An the stars way up in heaven
Linger longest after dawn
Here the wind is even tempered
An thar's perfume in the shower
An the frost apologizes
When he has to bite the flowers
Here the trees upon the hilltops,
Reachin way up in the sky,
Croon a love song thro the branches
As they kiss the leaves good-bye,
And the apples keep a callin
As they're falling now and then;
Sorter seem's to give us warmin
That it's time to take em in.
And thar's hickory nuts and walnuts,
Hatin bad to got to waste,
As the paw-paws fatten possums,
Just to suit a feller's taste.
Thar's persimmons big as turnips,
And thar's pumpkins by the ton,
With their gid old yellor bellies
Baskin in the autumn sun,
And the haystack in the medder

Looks like overgrown elves,
As old muley and the heifers
Struct around and help them selves.
An the old smoke house is loaded
Till its side are stickin out,
An the pickled pork's a soakin
By the barrel of sauer kraut,
An there's put away for winter
Fine preserves and jars of jams
While thrafters are a creakin
With weight of country hams,
While the good old country sausage
And the crispy cracklin bread,
Makes a feller want a tummy
Big as grandma's feather bed
So ya have an invitation,
Want you kindly think it over
For the latch strings allus hangin,
On the outside of the door.
An we're watin fer to see ya;
Plan your visit for this fall,
For yo'll find a lot a welcome
In old Crawford County.
It's the place that gave me birth
Seem's to me its part of heaven
That God sent down here on Earth.

Thanks to Bob Roberts for providing me with a copy of this poem!

If you have never seen it, at the Crawford County Library, there is a painting by Earl Denbo of the old courthouse that sat on the hill in "old English. It is always nice to see Earl's paintings out at various spots in the area.



From the County Historian...

Dr. John Newton Agan was born on April 12, 1864 at Marengo, Indiana. His parents were James Lewis and Letitia Matilda Steward Agan. He married Anna Marie McCormack.

He attended the Marengo Academy and the Hospital Medical School at Louisville, graduating in 1891, then locating in Iowa.

John served in the Spanish American War for the state of Iowa in Co. C 151st Infantry, as Private. He enlisted on June 14, 1898. He died on May 17, 1951 in Los Angeles, California and is buried at Glendale in Forest Lawn Memorial Park.

Contributed by Roberta Toby



Previous Meeting Minutes:

April 12, 2022

Meeting started at 6:30pm.

Program: Bob Roberts spoke to the group. He told of his life, growing up in English, what jobs he had throughout the years, organizations he was involved with and a bit of his family.

Minutes: Were read and motion made to approved by Roberta Toby and seconded by Louie Mitchell.

President / Newsletter / Website report: Newsletter coming out soon. Proctor House getting cleaned up. Orange County inventory books coming in.

Vice President Report: nothing

Membership / Financial: Beginning balance as of March 1, 2022: \$7,351.44. After deposits and bills were paid, ending balance as of March 31, 2022: \$7,042.71. Membership total: 64, Corporation 2, Library 1.

County Historian / Archives / Veteran's Memorial Report: Archives - nothing. VM: people can still buy bricks for the memorial. Historian - Bob Roberts brought in Benham book and lots of pictures. Andy Laswell brought in a plat map. Mentioned items Anna May Riddle donated, which includes a display case, desk (from English school) and business sign.

Proctorville report: Clean up is ongoing with yard sale set for May 20 and 21st, along with open house on both days.

Fundraising: see above

Meeting ended: 7:50pm

Attending: William Piper, Jason Froman, Jim Kaiser, Lance Stroud, Fran Farmer, Louie & Diane Mitchell, Andy & Glenda Laswell, Linden Roberts, Roberta Toby, Angela Thompson

May 10, 2022

Meeting started at 6:35pm with a moment of silence and the pledge of allegiance.

Bob Roberts brought in some pictures to share and told some stories. He also brought in a poem by Bill Patton about Crawford County, that was read by Bill Piper to the audience.

Minutes: Read and motion made to accept by Louie Mitchell, seconded by Roberta Toby. Motion passed.

President / Newsletter / Website: Mentioned that Sharon Morris was nominated by the CCHGS for the CFCC / Doris J Kaiser Volunteer of the Year award.

Vice President Report: VP not present.

Membership / Financial: Beginning balance April 1: \$7,042.71. After deposits and reimbursements, ending balance as of April 30: \$6,345.90. Membership: 64, Corporations: 2, Library: 1.

County Historian / Archives / Veteran's Memorial Report: Spoke about how the cannon wheels are rusted (at the memorial) and need to be touched up. Mentioned the Veterans celebration on Memorial Day at 11am.

Proctorville report: House had it's spring cleaning. Yard sale is on May 20th from 8am to 4pm and May 21st from 8am to noon-ish.

Fundraising: See above

Meeting ended: 7:05pm

Attending: William Piper, Lance Stroud, Sharon Morris, Louie Mitchell, Diane Mitchell, Roberta Toby, Cheryl Allen, Tami Redding, Angela Thompson, Judy Faith, Bob Roberts, Glenda Laswell, Andy Laswell.

June 14, 2022

Meeting started at 6:30 p.m. with a moment of silence and the pledge of allegiance.

Program - The guest speaker was Michael Gillespie, pastor at Marengo Christian Church. He spoke about the history of the old English Christian Church. In 1971, he came to the church to do a trial service and stayed until 1977. At that time, the building was 88 yrs. Old. The first meeting house was a log cabin located on Dog Creek Road. It was organized October 3, 1819. Then a new church was built in 1897 in English. Then later another church was built. He showed pictures of all of the churches. The building was old and sagging, so in 1974, they began the plans to build a new church which was finished in 1975. It was built on the same spot and suffered much damage by the flood in 1979 which destroyed most of downtown English including homes and businesses. The church had a large membership and he often had between 70-80 youth in his program. He told many amusing stories about his life in English and gave a handout of several pages with more funny and interesting details.

David Wilkins presented several wood-burning plaques that came from flat boats. Dick Willet, a river boat captain, helped to build river barges at Leavenworth and was active in the Posy Lodge. He also helped with the telephone system and water lines. These articles had been at the Leavenworth Library. Mrs. Knight gave him records about Carnes Mill in leather binders to give to the Historical Society.

Minutes - were read and Louie Mitchell made a motion to approve which was seconded by Jason Froman. The motion passed.

President's Report - Bill Piper reported that the yard sale brought in a total of \$2,300.75 including donations, memberships, and book sales. He is working on the application to the state to get a historical marker for along Highway 64 in Marengo. It will cost \$3,300, but we have a \$3,000 grant from the Community Foundation and Bill said that he will donate the other \$300 needed.

Vice-President's Report - Jason will hold the Proctor House open this Saturday, and then every other Saturday during the summer. The mowing is done by a few volunteers.

Treasurer's Report - The beginning balance as of May 1, 2022, was \$6,345.90. Deposits were \$2,725.75 and disbursements for utilities were \$363.59. Ending balance is \$8,708.06. Memberships are 32.

An election was held for officers for this fiscal year. Louie made a motion to keep the same slate of officers which was seconded by Roberta. An oral vote was unanimous in favor.

Those present were Carol Tomlinson, William Piper, Robin Piper, Roberta Toby, Jim Kaiser, Jackie Heisterberg, Tammi Redding, Lance Stroud, Sharon Morris, Louie Mitchell, Diane Mitchell, Jason Froman, Tyler Gallien, Mike Gillespie, Kim Hammond Ross, Karen Gaither, Angela Thompson and David Wilkins.

The next following pages include a scan of an early 1900s (sorry, I forgot the date!) photo of the English Christian Church membership. I have split the photo into three parts to retain quality. Thanks to Bob Roberts for letting me scan this.

Back Row Left to Right
 Orlan Miller - Real - Darnell Cummins - John Spears
 Fred Miller - Leonard Cummins - David Baggenly - Benton Pierson
 Orlan E. Watson - Eddie Real - Ellis Joney - Real
 Second Row Left to Right
 Leta Spears - Mack - Leah Austin - Louella McElain
 Jackie Edd - Mrs. Pats Temple - Nellie Temple - Miller
 Lela Standiford - Elva Cartridge - Ruth Sanderson -
 Elizabeth Vogelberg - Jewell Robinson - Mildred Markers -
 Fern Wiggins - Edith Pierson - Alma M. Tucker -
 Rhoda Markers - X MRS JOHN LOBEY X Nell Denton
 - Mrs. Fred Miller - Mrs. Orlan E. Watson
 Front Row Left to Right
 - Ruth Hudson - PAUL Joney - Carlton Pierson
 Samuel Lee Tucker - Robert O. Leggett - Faye Higginfield -
 Mrs. Mabel - E. STANDIFORD - WARREN Joney -
 Alton Junior Roberts - Gustave Tucker -

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Membership Dues

Dues for the Crawford County Genealogical and Historical Society are \$15 per year for single memberships, \$20 for family or \$25 for corporation/businesses. The fee is due each June as the new year starts in July. A renewal form is available on the website, www.cchgs.org.

Send your check to:
Sharon Morris
CCHGS Treasurer
P.O. Box 162
Leavenworth, IN 47137

Meetings

The Crawford County Historical and Genealogical Society meets on the 2nd Tuesday of each month, 6:30pm, at the CCHGS Headquarters (310 Oak Circle, English IN). You can call 812-338-2579 to confirm.

Website:

www.cchgs.org

Social Media:

Search for "Crawford County Historical and Genealogical Society" on FACEBOOK!



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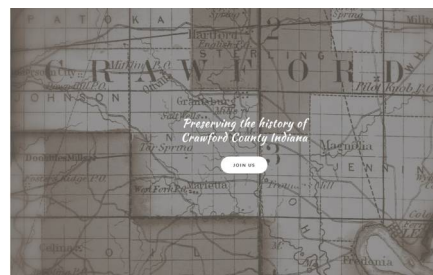
Our book list has been REVISED!!
Some out of print titles have now returned and we are also offering DIGITAL versions of most of our books. The digital versions will be sold on CD-R in PDF format. Check our website, <http://www.cchgs.org> for more information!

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