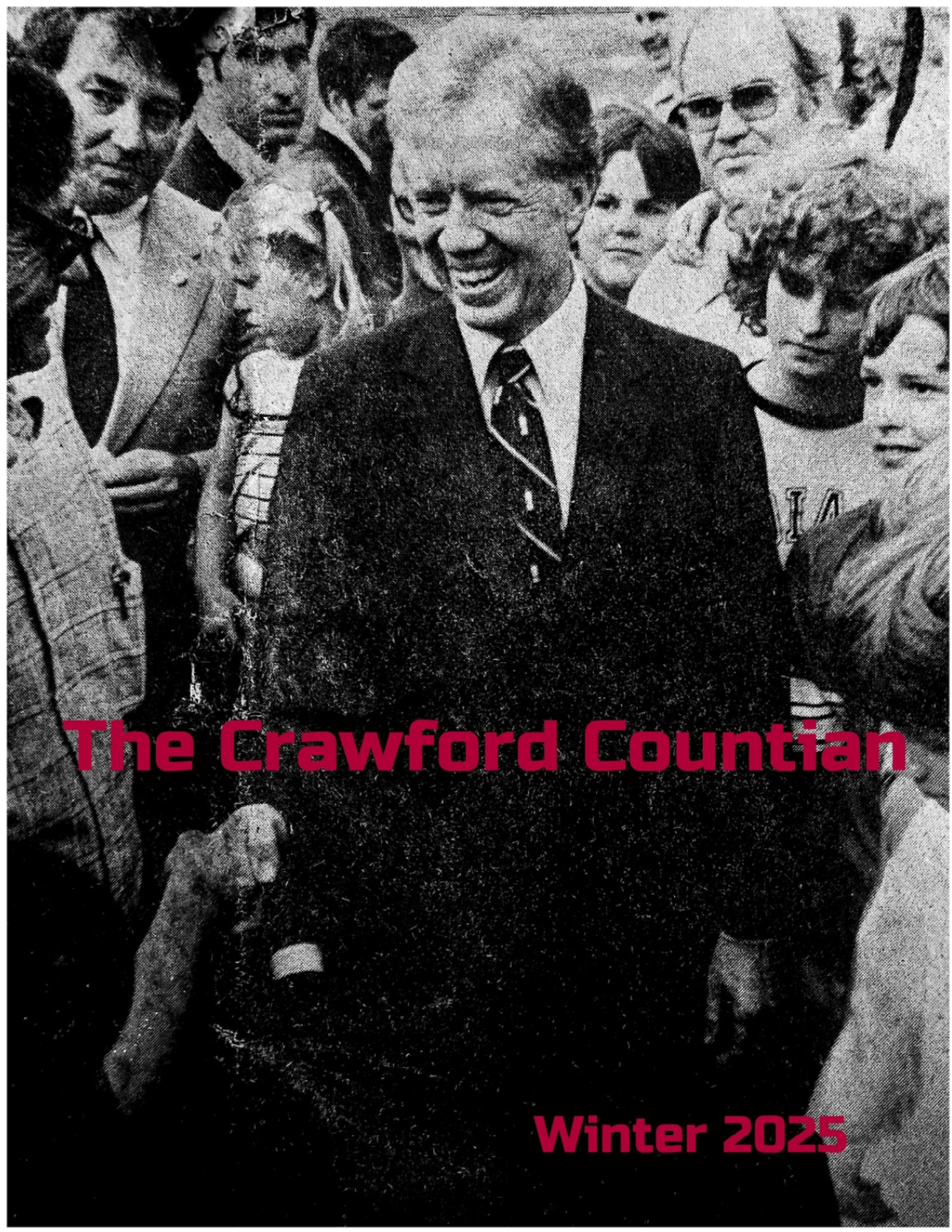




The Crawford Countian

Winter 2025

Welcome to the winter edition of The Crawford Countian! This is our "down time" during the year, but we do have some big plans coming up later on, particularly the field trips for the Proctor House. We are aiming for May 13 and 15. If you would like to help out, let me know! Details are still being worked out. We hope to have a field trip for home schoolers in the area as well.



While we will not have any meetings until March (weather permitting), we are still open on Tuesdays and Thursdays, 11am to 2pm (weather permitting), so stop on by! You can also check out our youtube channel for previous programs as well as other material that you may have missed out on (<https://www.youtube.com/@Crawfordcountyindianahistory>).

-William Piper, President of CCHGS

Email: billgpiper@hotmail.com

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President Jimmy Carter shakes hands with Mrs. Delores Howerton - July 31, 1979

President Carter Visits English

With the recent passing of President Jimmy Carter, I thought it would be a great opportunity to reprint the story and photos of him from his trip to the area after the 1979 flood. The original article I am pulling from was featured in the now defunct "Hard Times" newspaper V1, #23, published on August 8, 1979.

Weary English greets Jimmy

By Carole Thompson

The count last Tuesday was 78 disasters in the United States, but President Jimmy Carter chose to appear in person at the one in English which he had just declared, the first United States President to so honor Crawford County.

There were forest fires in California, a flood in Houston with a fire on top of that, floods all over, many fires, some droughts and always the threat of a tornado, earthquake or hurricane.

English needed the lift Carter's visit gave them.

"He showed sympathy for us," said Roy Harmon, who shook the President's hand. "He hated to see it, but he seen it. He made a speech out there, but I'm so hard of hearing, I didn't hear none of it. He had the biggest helicopter I ever saw."

English Town Board President Gene Howerton was the only one in town to have any hard evidence that Carter was going to visit, although John Thompson, one of the few English businessmen to have his business open again, said that a well-dressed man came into his gas station early Tuesday looking for a football field.

"I said, 'We don't even have a football team, let alone a football field', and after he left I started putting two and two together. I figured I scared him off."

Needless to say, the President found a landing spot for his helicopter and the VFW Post may never be missed because of it.

"I know why he's taken such an interest in this town," Howerton said later.

"Neither one of us had enough statistics to know whether Plains is the same size as English, but it's close. He said if we were 600, we're smaller, and 700, we're larger. I couldn't remember if we're 570-some or 670-some."

English was a bit more prominent on the map after Carter left, and many wondered if he'd be the only one to make hay while the rain poured.

But, for the federal disaster workers that rained in after Carter lifted out, the President's visit meant more than a P.R. gimmick. It meant a redoubling of effort on the part of the bureaucrats, and may result in a perfection of the disaster relief routine.

Dick Dickerson, English's Federal Disaster Center manager, works for the Federal Emergency Management Agency, a month-old conglomeration of several disaster-type federal departments, or a "new name and a change in the higher-ups" as one FEMA worker explained it.

Sitting in the English Elementary School gym Sunday afternoon, Dickerson was counting up the 17 flood victims who had visited the center on the Sabbath, and wiping the sweat from his brow. He didn't have a lot to do, but he was going to be readily available if the need arose.

"It is a little bit unusual for us to be working over the weekend, even in a disaster, and you can credit President Carter's influence with spurring the government people here to do a good job," Dickerson said.

"And, if there's still work to be done Friday (formerly planned as closing day for the center, but now moved up to Wednesday), we'll stay a little longer. Instructions are to stay here until the work is completed."

Whose instructions?

"Just instructions; probably very high up. The three per cent interest loan (for homeowners through the Small Business Administration) is very unusual, too. The last one I worked was over six per cent."

Another view of Carter's influence in English was offered by the Indiana Civil Defense Department's state center manager, Steve Schultz. "I think Carter hurt us by pressing us into getting this place open. We weren't prepared when this place opened. There was a lot of confusion at the beginning."

Carter phoned Howerton Friday afternoon, a call most of English and the bureaucrats expected.

"We talked about the difficulty of setting up about 20 trailers with sewage," Howerton reported. "He told me to tell all the people around that he'd remember them in his prayers, and he wished he'd met us under different circumstances." Howerton's eyes were bloodshot and he mumbled something about 36 hours of sleep down the road.

"Carter is concerned that the government workers are treating the people kind and courteous," Howerton said in the hallway of the English gym. One had the feeling that the walls had ears.

Maybe Carter had an influence in English, and maybe he didn't, but on Sunday, Stanley and Norma Jones were all smiles. The couple is living in a friend's mobile home without water awaiting a temporary mobile home from the federal government.

"He took the time to explain to me everything, he didn't just say you're too old for this," Jones said about one of the nameless federal strangers. "They called me and they sent representatives, and they're sending a crew down to see if my house can be made liveable.

"They've been nice and they've been mannerly. If everyone's been dealt with as fair as we have, they've been fortunate."

*Gene Howerton is to the right
of the President -->*



Our High School Students Helped with Doc Prep. You Can Too!

Old records are priceless to people trying to piece together their family tree. They are treasures to anyone wanting to learn about their family or local history. For example, old probate records show the possessions and last wishes of a person. It's like a window into their lives. But, those old records are worthless unless people can get to them. Digitizing these old records and making them accessible online makes them available to search and also helps preserve these old, fragile records. Volunteer help is needed to prepare these old records to be digitized (scanned, photographed). Crawford County High School students helped during their first annual day of service on December 19th. We need your help in what we call "doc prep" too.

What is "Doc Prep"? – Often records are folded and stored in envelopes. They need to be carefully taken out of envelopes, fasteners removed, and sheets flattened so the person doing the digitizing can quickly and efficiently scan each sheet. Amazingly, FamilySearch will digitize the old records and make them available online for free. Their mission is to promote genealogy work. But some old county records need to be prepared before they can digitize them. That's where volunteers are needed.



This person is removing folded documents, removing staples and fasteners, flattening the pages and putting them in file folders so they are ready to scan.

The documents you prepare will be "scanned" (photographed) to create a digital image of each page you have prepared.



What are the qualifications to do this volunteer work? – Mostly it's a matter of being reliable (show up when you say you will) and being careful (these are old records). The work is easy: remove documents and fasteners, flatten sheets and don't mix them up with other records. You'll be sitting at a table doing this. Come prepared to see interesting old records and talk with fellow volunteers. It's a good time and what you will be doing is important. Most volunteers will be adults but an older teenager accompanied by an adult can also volunteer.

Where and When? Doc prep will be taking place at the Crawford County Annex Building, 743 East State Road 64, English, IN, (across from the Dollar General store). Doc Prep will be going on in the Archive Room in the back of the building every week at the following times:

- Monday 10am – 2pm
- Tuesday 10am – 2pm

If the weather looks like it may be bad or you are wondering if doc prep will be going on just call the Crawford County Clerk's Office at 812-338-2565.

High School Students Helped on Their Day of Service

On Thursday 12/19 Mrs. Lori Miller, the high school teacher that organized the day of service, had two groups of 12 students from the Crawford County High School. They came to the County Annex to help with document preparation for the FamilySearch digitizing project. Thanks to Christine Harbeson for telling Mrs. Miller about this project. That got the ball rolling.

Before they started their doc prep work we wanted them to learn some interesting things about county government, the County Archive and the old records there. Dan Crecelius, County Commissioner, talked to them about county government. He explained why these records, though old, are still very important. Roberta Toby, County Historian, showed them old records, some over 200 years old. They got to see county record books from 1818, when Crawford County was organized. They saw records written with quill pens describing livestock owned by farmers. They saw old marriage and will record books. They learned what a probate record is and heard a story about how those records give us a glimpse into the lives of ancestors that lived long ago.

Tina Delfrate, a digitizer working on this Crawford County project, showed the students why doc prep is so important. She showed them how she digitizes a record and explained that all these digitized records will be made available for free online by FamilySearch.org. Students that wanted to actually got to use the equipment to digitize some records.

Then the students started doing the doc prep work. They had fun doing it together. And they got a LOT of work done.



These old documents that will be digitized will be treasures to families researching their family trees and to people doing local history work. The students will long remember their experience. They were a great help to our county in the process. Thanks to them for making a difference!

You can make a difference too. You are needed! Will you volunteer to help? Have fun being a part of a great effort!

- John Crawford
crawf.jr@gmail.com



From the Archives: 1910 Marengo School photo

Here's an interesting photo from our archives, and guess what, we have names! One of my pet peeves about finding old photos is the lack of identification on the back of the photos, so if you have photos, always be sure to identify them! Your family and others will appreciate it in the future!

Back row: Viola Denton, Alma Engleman, Fred Byrum, Lloyd Adams, xx Wilson, xx Austin, Nettie Stewart, Herman Jones, Harlon Sevege, Ruffy Bullington, Fred Stewart, Rodney White

Front row: Leon Austin, Ermel Engleman, Naomi Stewart, Ada Baker, Arthur Wyman, Oren Wilson, Howard Batman, xx Suttan, Lee Pierson

Teacher: Willard Key



(circa 1905 - Crawford Masonic Lodge # 470)

WANTED: CC Lodge histories!

I am looking for any information on the various Crawford County lodges that existed. While there are only currently three Masonic lodges in the county, at one time we had multiple lodges in each town, with the Freemasons and Odd Fellows leading the way but there were others. Any histories, information, member lists, photos, memorabilia, etc... would be greatly appreciated! If you have such items, please contact me at billgpiper@hotmail.com or you can mail it to my snail mail address: Bill Piper, PO Box 472, English, IN 47118. You can also bring it by the CCHGS building on Tuesdays from 11am to 2pm.

Previous meeting minutes:

October 8, 2024:

The meeting began at 6:30pm with a moment of silence followed by the Pledge of Allegiance.

Program: John Crawford presented an interesting history of English which was originally named Hartford. Crawford County was formed in 1818, and in 1840 WW Cumins records the plat for Hartford in the Fredonia courthouse. In 1842, there were a few stores in Hartford, until the Civil War, Hartford is described as having a few log huts, a log schoolhouse, a church and some stores. Town lots were offered for sale in 1839 with terms of 12 months credit. Hartford prospered with the arrival of the Air Line Railroad with many new homes and stores being built. Then, in 1874, the County Seat was moved from Leavenworth to Hartford. Hartford was incorporated as "English" in 1884. William English was well-known as a banker, a political figure, and a business man. He may have helped with getting the railroad line to come through Hartford. He was viewed as a friend to the town, so the name changed to English. The town later commissioned a statue to honor him to be placed in the public square. It was dedicated on June 23, 1900. The video of John's presentation is on our website (Youtube Channel).

David Wilkins gave information about the old button factory in Old Town Leavenworth. It didn't really make buttons, only plugs. He passed out examples to show what they were like. There were many difficulties such as getting and disposing of the mussel shells, expensive equipment, the drilling, sawing, and punching out the disk, etc... The town had 4 plants but only ran one.

Minutes: were reviewed. Roberta Toby made a motion to approve. It was seconded by Annette Gilliland and the motion passed.

President's Report: newsletter is out this week. The interview with Gerald Hughes is posted on our web site (Youtube channel) and had gotten 700 views.

Vice-President's Report: Tyler Gallien will hold the Proctor House open this Saturday.

Financial Report: The beginning balance as of Sept 1 was \$14,307.21. membership deposits were \$70. Expenses for utilities, etc... were \$451.20. The ending balance as of Sept 30 is \$13,926.01. Membership is 62.

Archives Report: Roberta and John met with the teachers during their tour to show them the resources available in the archives. She and Bob Roberts were interviewed by a reporter from Indianapolis about the English flood in 1979. It will be shown on Channel 8 in November. Karen Qualters donated several interesting items to the Society.

Those Attending: Carol Tomlinson, Roberta Toby, William and Robin Piper, Louie and Diane Mitchell, Carol Groves, Bob Roberts, David Wilkins, John and Sherry Crawford, Annette Gilliland, Milie Beasley, Edward Beasley, Tyler Gallien, Jeremy Flanigan and Judy Faith.

November 12, 2024

The meeting began at 6:30pm with a moment of silence followed by the Pledge of Allegiance.

John Crawford announced the county's old records {about 500,000} will be digitized. Volunteers are needed to help with this project to prepare the materials.

Program: John Crawford and Roberta Toby presented info on Dam 44 in the Old Town of Leavenworth. They used material {text and pictures} from David Wilkins book on the Dam. Facts were given about the Ohio River and the great flood of 1937, also on how the locks operated.

Bill Piper noted the Library will do a presentation on the history of Patoka Lake. The next meeting for the CCHGS will be December 10th for the Christmas dinner. It will be at the Chapel of Prayer at 3 o'clock.

Minutes: Were reviewed. Louie Mitchell made a motion to approve. Robin Piper seconded it and the motion passed.

President's Report: Becky Stetter is now in a nursing home. Her son, Aaron, has delivered Becky's donation of old records and materials to the CCHGS.

Financial Report: Beginning balance as of October 1, 2024, was \$13,926.01. Deposits were \$175.00. Expenses were \$2,694.31 due to prepaying the insurance. Ending balance is \$11,406.70. Membership is 65.

Proctor House Museum Report: A date has been set for the 4th graders field trip to the Museum.

Donations: Angela Thompson donated a hand mirror to the Proctor House Museum that her mother had bought from Florence Rodman's estate. Mr. Rodman had been the Train Depot master. She told a charming story about other things her mother had seen and wanted.

Meeting adjourned at 7:30 pm.

Those attending: William and Robin Piper, Jeremy Flanigan, Jason Froman, Roberta Toby, Ed and Cheryl Whitmire, Carol Tomlinson, Annette Gilliland, Edward Beasley, Emilie Beasley, Louie and Diane Mitchell, John and Sherry Crawford, Angela Thompson, Carol Groves, and Judy Faith.

December 10, 2024

There was no meeting but we did hold our annual Christmas party at the Whitmare Chapel of Prayer (former Pilot Knob Church). There was around 30 who attended the event.



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!

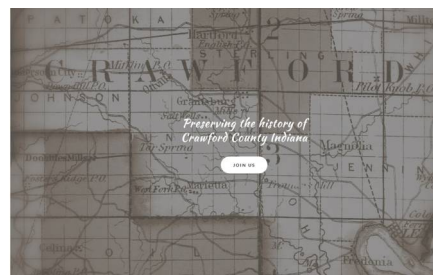


Books for sale

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!

The Crawford Countian is the official newsletter of the CCHGS.

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Be sure to visit our website to keep up to date on various events, our hours of operations, books for sale and other misc items. If you have a suggestion, you can send it to me via the site or send queries as well for the newsletter.