

THE ARCH

Putnam County Museum Magazine



PUTNAM COUNTY MUSEUM

Bridging Generations. Connecting Communities. Preserving Past.

THE ARCH

VOLUME 14 ■ SEPTEMBER 2018 ■ ISSUE 1

LET THERE BE LIGHT!



“It just keeps getting better. As of Friday, August 17, thanks to 3 Kings working in the rain, our parking lot is nice and bright at night!”

The mission of the Putnam County Museum is to collect, preserve, and interpret the natural, historical, and cultural heritage of the county.

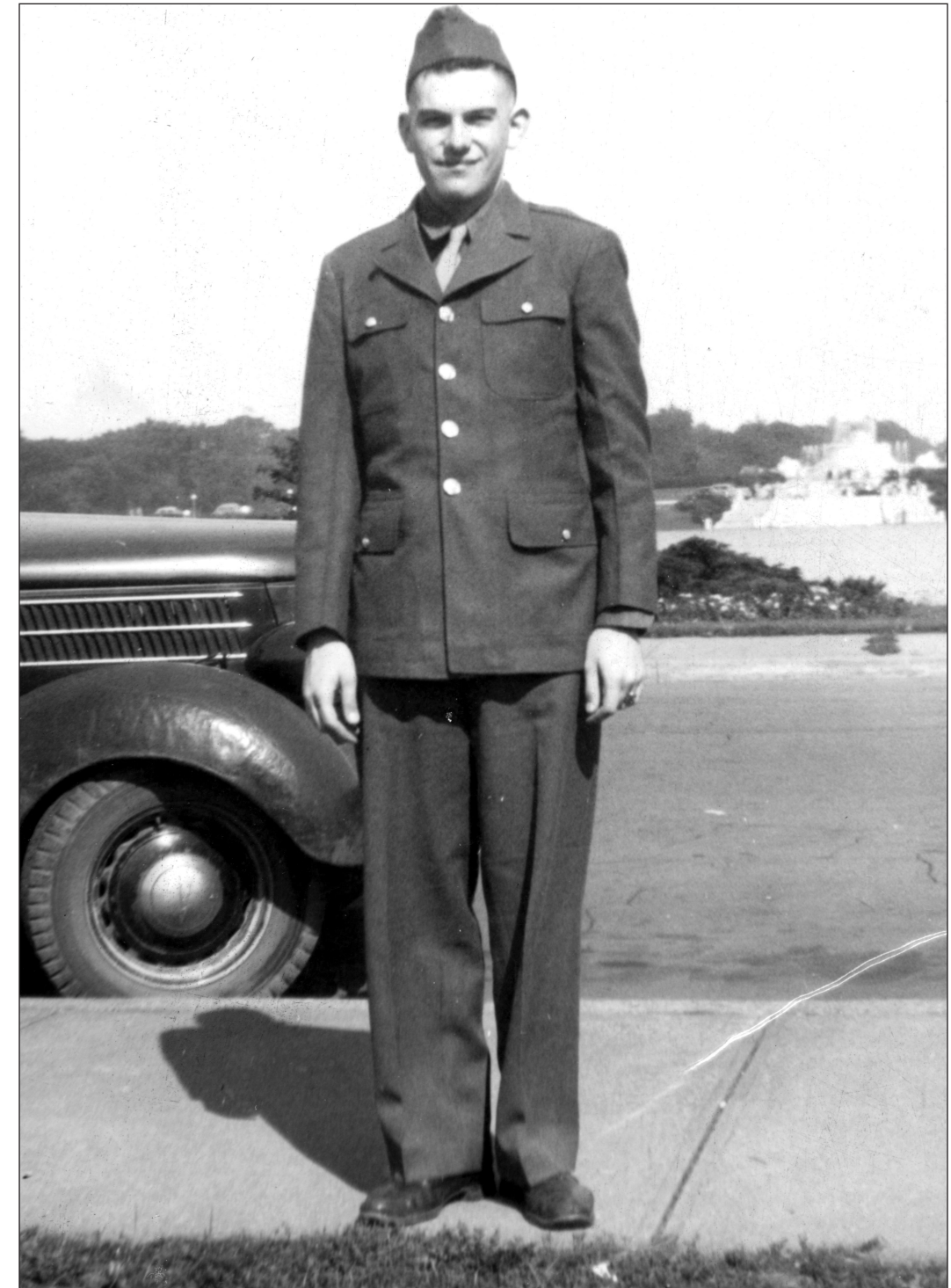


Putnam County Museum



PUTNAM COUNTY MUSEUM
1105 N. JACKSON STREET
GREENCASTLE, INDIANA 46135

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“PRIVATE BAUGHMAN GOES TO WAR.”

IN THIS ISSUE...

- *Pages 3 Private Baughman Goes*
- *Page 5 Tale of Early Settler*
- *Page 6 Vital Volunteers*
- *Page 7 County Bicentennial*
- *Page 8 Persidential Ponderings*
- *Page 9 Malcolm's Passion*
- *Page 10 Coming Events*
- *Page 11 Membership*

FROM ASBURY HALL TO A FOXHOLE IN FRANCE: PRIVATE BAUGHMAN GOES TO WAR

Written and submitted by John Dittmer, DePauw professor emeritus of history

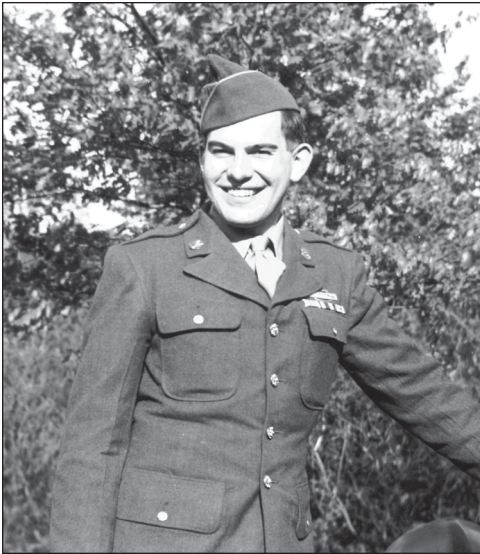
The Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor on Dec. 7, 1941, sent shock waves across America. This meant world war, but few could foresee its devastating consequences. At DePauw University, President Clyde Wildman advised students to “take plenty of time to think things over. My suggestion to you DePauw men is that you hold steady.” The editors of The Boulder, the campus literary magazine, agreed: “Let’s resolve to take this war in our stride, keeping calm and level-headed. There’s nothing to get excited about.” Misplaced as these sentiments may have been, they reflected the determination of the University community to carry on as much as possible with its academic and social life intact.

John Baughman was only 17 when he enrolled at DePauw the following fall. Born in Evansville, Ind., and raised in Detroit, John came from a long line of alums stretching back to pre-Civil War days. With the draft age at 20, he could look forward to at least two years of uninterrupted study. Like most first-year men, he pledged a fraternity, Alpha Tau Omega, and began adjusting to his new life away from home. That life took a radical turn in November 1942, when Congress lowered the draft age to 18. For John, and for most DePauw males, this meant military service at the end of the academic year.

A good number of DePauw men enrolled in the Navy V-12 program, soon to operate on many campuses, including DePauw’s. Two years of academic work and specialized Navy training would result in a commission as an ensign. Baughman, however, opted for the new Army Special Training Program (ASTP), which packed four years of college into 18 months. ASTP recruited the nation’s best and brightest students. According to Major Gen. Walter Weible, ASTPers had higher average test scores than cadets at West Point and the Naval Academy, and they had to work much harder. Included in this elite group of recruits were future U.S. Sen. Frank Church and Bob Dole; Secretary of State Henry Kissinger; movie director Mel Brooks; author Gore Vidal; and Hoosier author Kurt Vonnegut, who was captured by the Germans during the Battle of the Bulge and imprisoned in a slaughterhouse in Dresden.

Accepted into the ASTP at the University of Iowa, John first had to complete the army’s basic training program at Fort Benning, Ga. He did not find it to his liking. Wishing his

father a happy birthday, John complained that, “they give me no time to even get a card. Run, run, run. Bawling out after bawling out. KP, everything . . . My morale is at a new low.” Young Baughman was not alone in his distaste for army life. When asked about troop morale, Bob Farber, a 1935 DePauw graduate and later the school’s academic dean, replied, “you don’t want to be here. You damn everything: the mess, the officers, the confinement, and you will be the happiest man in the world when your discharge is approved.” One of the



myths about the Greatest Generation who fought in The Good War is that they were “gung-ho” about military service, eager to take on the enemy. However, most GIs, including Baughman, would have agreed with Farber’s conclusion that “you know why you are here and you are a good soldier.” All through his military service John kept up with events at DePauw, even while at the front. He received the student newspaper in the mail, and his ATO brother Jack Graham, feeling guilty because he had a medical deferment, wrote the brothers regularly, keeping them in touch with aspects of college life not covered in The DePauw.

Having completed his basic training at Fort Benning, John arrived in Iowa City in January 1944, telling his parents that “after Georgia, this is paradise!” Accepted into the ASTP engineering program, he looked forward to at least two years in Iowa. Yet only three weeks after their first class, the ASTP students received official word that the Army was cancelling the program. The Normandy invasion was only months away, and at that point the Army needed bodies, not more officers. Like most other ASTPs, Baughman was assigned to a combat infantry division.

One can only imagine the shock that these ASTP recruits felt, many of them teenagers. Believing they were being groomed to be highly skilled officers and technicians, they were now destined to become, in the words of the historian of ASTP, “intellectuals in foxholes.” John told his parents that he was “bitterly disappointed.” Reflecting on his classmates back home, he wrote that “everybody is a lieutenant, or ensign, or in school, or something, and I’m just a buck private.” Along with many other ASTPs, John became a member of the 44th Infantry Division (Company E, Second Battalion, 114th Regi-

MEMBERSHIP

Wish List

- *Amazon Gift cards. By the way, if you shop at AmazonSmile and choose Putnam County Museum as your charity, Amazon donates a portion of your purchase to the Museum!*
- *Paper Towels*
- *Toilet Tissue*
- *Tall Kitchen Trash Can Liners*
- *Swiffer Duster Refills*
- *Half Gallons of White Vinegar*
- *Printer/Copier Paper*
- *New program: Volunteer to answer phones and greet people, weekdays, 10:00 to Noon*

.....

Gifts

In memory of Julia Jean Romine

Ellie Ypma

Wendy Welter Meyers

In memory of Marilyn Gough

Red Hat Honeybells

Judy George

In memory of Jack Sigworth

Ellie Ypma

In memory of Nina Lee Loughmiller Harris

Mark, Lisa and Meredith Mock

If you have not renewed your membership or wish to join, please clip this form and send it with your dues to Putnam County Museum, 1105 North Jackson Street, Greencastle, IN 46135

Membership dues are an essential source of funding for the Museum’s exhibits, programs, and conservation of our precious artifacts and stories.

- _____HEIRLOOM MEMBERSHIP \$1000
- _____TREASURE MEMBERSHIP \$500
- _____COLLECTIBLE MEMBERSHIP \$250
- _____ARTIFACT MEMBERSHIP \$100
- _____FAMILY MEMBERSHIP \$50
- _____INDIVIDUAL MEMBERSHIP \$25

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____

Zip _____

Email _____@_____

Phone _____

Preferred method of contact (choose any or all)

__Mail __Email __Phone_____

Have more fun and help accomplish the Museum’s work by volunteering. Check any areas of interest:

- | | |
|---|--------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Docent | <input type="checkbox"/> Office help |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Events | <input type="checkbox"/> Publicity |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Gift Shop | <input type="checkbox"/> Education |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Collections care | <input type="checkbox"/> Fundraising |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Processing artifacts | <input type="checkbox"/> Kids Club |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Exhibits | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Membership | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> I have a story for the oral history collection | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Other tell us how you would like to help_____ | |

MALCOLM'S PASSION

By Kim Clodfelter

Baughman- Continued...

dawn the next day John found his platoon, and "so much mail and DePauws I could spend the day reading in my hole."

Two days later John's toes had turned "a steel gray in color," and he returned to battalion aid. This time a medical officer, Captain Ross, put him in an ambulance. His rifle, grenades and ammunition were taken from him and he was driven to a clearing station, where a doctor looked at his feet and sent him 30 miles away to an evacuation hospital in Saarbours. John had contracted a serious case of trench foot, which if not treated properly often resulted in gangrene and amputation. The major therapy for the disease then was lots of bed rest.

On Christmas Eve 1944, John was lying in a bunk on a hospital train heading across France to an Army hospital in Dijon. There was a little Christmas tree with lights and decorations in his car. The Hollywood actress Madeline Carroll was the Red Cross representative on the train. After supper they turned off the lights in the car except for the tree, "and several of the nurses, ward boys and Miss Carroll came in with candles and serenaded us with carols." Private Baughman's war was over.

Like most veterans who saw combat, John did not talk much about his service until years later. But he shared some of his thoughts about war in a letter to his grandmother while recuperating: "There is no glory, no heroics. It is grim and cruel and ghastly," he told her. "You sleep with your face to the rain and pray that yours is not the next shell, and you dream of the USA, concerts, Meharry Hall, geology lab, and lightning bugs. And then you wake up to attack, to fight, to duck, to kill. The hell of war can only be recorded in one's mind and heart, to remain there eternally."

For seven months John received treatment for trench foot in several military hospitals. After his medical discharge, he enrolled at DePauw as a sophomore in the fall of 1945, a month after the Japanese surrender. He graduated Phi Beta Kappa in 1948, went on to study French history at Harvard, where he received his M.A. degree, and then took his doctorate at the University of Michigan in 1953. While he was a Fulbright Scholar at the University of Paris in 1951, John revisited the Alsace battleground where he had fought. Dr. Baughman joined the DePauw history faculty in 1953, married Betty Bowden, a librarian at DePauw, and taught several thousand undergraduates in a distinguished teaching and scholarly career that spanned 37 years. He retired in 1990. Professor Baughman will be celebrating the 70th anniversary of his graduating college class in May.



John J. Baughman DePauw '48 on maneuvers in Louisiana.



John J. Baughman DePauw '48 at the National World War II Memorial in Washington, D.C. in 2016.

To most, Malcolm's love of history comes as no surprise. He writes the stories; keeps memories alive.

The research is a journey into the past. To preserve history; make it last.

Stories once forgotten, now told
Of courage and bravery begin to unfold.
What secrets await to be discovered?
What treasure will be uncovered?

Perhaps, an old recipe or letter
With time, the memory has only gotten better.
He writes stories of churches and towns, once fully alive
Now gone, only a picture survives.

His mission and call
Is to write a book, preserve history for all.

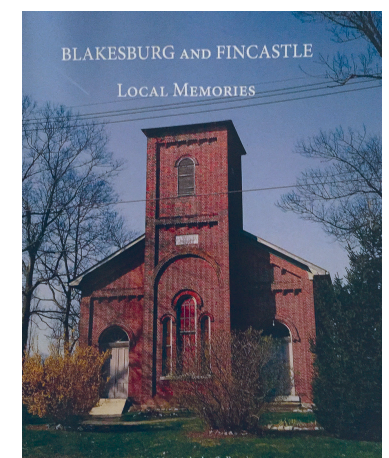
Among Malcolm's many history books that are available at the Putnam County Museum are these titles:

Clodfelter Pioneer Days
Indiana Carrington
1782 - 1997
Portland Mills Remembered
Portland Mills Pictorial
Parkview Christian Church
1868 - 2005
Memories of Morton
Clinton Falls - A Look At Its
Unique History
Blakesburg and Fincastle -
Local Memories
Roachdale Through the Years
New Maysville From Its
Howling Days
Bainbridge Remembered
1824-2018



Malcolm S Romine

Malcolm has also written:
Inspiring the Giving Spirit - The
First Twenty-Five Years of the Putnam County Com-
munity Foundation, Co-authored with Elaine Peck



VITAL VOLUNTEERS

By Megan Rentfro



Barb and David Lane

VITAL VOLUNTEERS

Barb and David Lane have been pillars of our community and the Museum for years. At one time, they owned the Sear's store in Greencastle. Another time, they were partners in an antique shop at the hauntingly beautiful Locust Hill, on US 231, north of Greencastle. Currently, their antique business takes up numerous booths at Timeless Antiques, on the east side of the courthouse square, in Rockville, Indiana.

The Lanes became associated with the Putnam County Museum when they volunteered to maintain the Native Plant boxes in front of the building. Mrs. Lane is a member of long-standing with the Greencastle Garden Club, and knew what she was doing. This offer of help was the start of a beneficial partnership that helped the Museum (and the plants!) grow. Mrs. Lane, as well as her dear friend Mrs. Peters worked together on the planters.

A hand-cranked agitator washing machine was the first item the Lanes donated to the Museum. This was followed by an ironing board, a lace curtain stretcher, a quilting frame and an antique sad iron. With the addition of hand-carved clothes pegs and some clothesline, an entire laundry exhibit was developed! At a later time, a Museum member stated that a switchboard was needed to go with our McLean telephones. By happenstance, the Lanes purchased one at an auction. It's now on display by the telephones and the DePauw phone-booth.

The Lanes have variety of favorite things they love to collect; unusual primitives, quality china, one-of-a-kind glass ware and flow blue china. The Lanes' favorite experience at the Museum is seeing objects being preserved that hold history of other times, but still, Putnam County times. Barb and David are pleased that items are being brought in, instead of

being disposed of or tossed out. "People are opening up their attics, closets and barns and thinking about what items hold history that should be saved and shared," says David. Fewer objects are being lost to the dusts of time. "It's so much fun watching the Museum grow," says Barb, who has been a docent at Conner Prairie and the Indianapolis Children's Museum, and is a member of the Children's Museum Guild. David has watched the Museum grow from the ground up. He says that much of the progress and development is from the excitement and enthusiasm that the director, Lisa Mock, has brought to the table.

The Lanes have a message for the Putnam County residents: if you are questioning what to do with an item, contact the Museum. By donating an artifact, you are helping preserve our history. That shows respect and care for those who came before us, and will benefit everyone who calls Putnam County home now, and future generations.

The Museum appreciates the Lanes and their willingness to help find the "missing links" to many of our exhibit endeavors! They have been supportive of various special events and are looking forward to an Old Trail Inn dinner that includes turkey and dressing.

THANK YOU!!

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*A Tale- Continued from page 5...*

chair and addressed the audience in a few brief and pointed remarks in favor of upholding the flag of his country. Only a month later, in May of 1861, Col. Lewis H. Sands of the union guards died at the age of 65, and was buried with honors at Greencastle City Cemetery, also known as black stock. There is a gravestone with his name still legible in the cemetery today.

The oldest building in Greencastle, and possibly in Putnam County, is empty now and through the years has certainly encountered many changes. It is the hope of its owner, that time and adequate financing can bring it to life again. If anyone knows more information about the history of the building, or more importantly can correct speculations here in, your input would be welcome. Perhaps you might even envision a happier future for the building, and if so, please contact the museum and/or Ms. Hammond. It is important to remember as Peter Westbrook stated, "So much of our history lies in preserving our past."

## COUNTY BICENTENNIAL FAST APPROACHING. ARE WE READY?

Written by Larry Tippin, Putnam County Historian

During my research of various historical matters in Putnam County, I have noticed we have not had a comprehensive history published since 1966. That history was prepared for the Sesquicentennial of the State of Indiana and contained a fair amount of information merely repeated from the 1879, 1887 and 1910 histories, with reminiscences of the various townships taken from residents with extensive life experience. Some of these reminiscences were apparently based on local folklore, and not always supported by primary source documentation.

The bicentennial of the founding of Putnam County is fast approaching, and I propose we prepare and publish a new history of the county in conjunction with that milestone. I would like to ask that individuals and groups from all parts of the county who are interested in exploring this project to meet and brainstorm for this new publication. We might collectively determine it appropriate to highlight the county as a whole, then each township again. Or we might decide to break the publication up by topic, such as early history of the county, the development of transportation in the county, sports, development of industries, memorable milestones, and goodness knows what other topics we might come up with.

I also propose we not just repeat information from previously published histories or other secondary sources, but rather perform serious research of any available primary source information. I realize that some of the early records are no longer available, but possibly with the help of experienced researchers we might be surprised what we can find.

We also need to discuss some sort of celebration to recognize the founding of the county. That may be a separate project with different individuals experienced in these matters. Who doesn't love a parade?

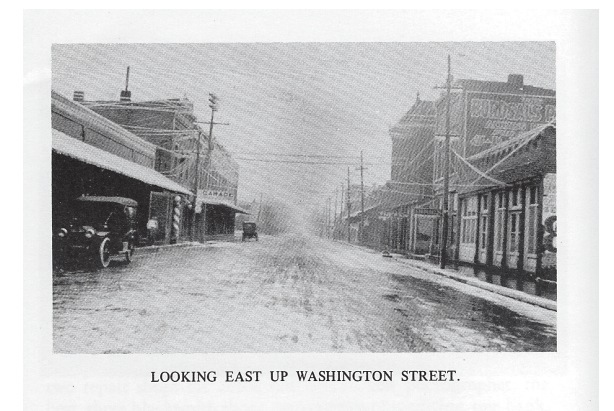
We may also need to determine which date to actually use as the founding of the county. The Indiana General Assembly approved an Act on December 31, 1821 to create a county from Vigo and Owen to be called Putnam. This date has been generally considered to be the date Putnam County was created, but is it really? That Act assigned five men who were responsible for "the fixing of the seats of justice in all new counties hereafter to be laid off." These men were assigned the duties of acting commissioners and were specifically instructed to convene at the house of James Athey, in the said county of Putnam, on the first Monday of the following May (1822). These five men did not fulfill their obligations and the General Assembly named five new men to do so on January 7, 1823, which they did on or about March or April of that year. That appears to be when the

"paperwork" to officially organize the county was actually prepared.

Also, the original boundaries of the county were not the same as the current boundaries, as they were farther to the south and west. Changes were made by the Indiana General Assembly to the original boundaries on December 21, 1822, Act 29 of the 1823-1824 Assembly (An act attaching a part of the counties of Montgomery and Putnam to the County of Parke), February 12, 1825 (when Clay County was formed from parts of Owen, Vigo, Sullivan and Putnam Counties) and February 17, 1838 (by taking away the southwest township), at which time the county boundaries were established in their current rectangular shape, except for the former Mill Creek Township. Now part of Jefferson Township, Mill Creek Township was removed from Morgan County and annexed into Putnam County in 1860 upon petition of the residents of that township. After legal challenges to this annexation, the state legislature affirmed in the spring 1861 session that Mill Creek Township was to be henceforth considered a part of Putnam County, affirmed by the Putnam County Commissioners, as noted in the March 14, 1861 edition of the Greencastle Banner. The addition of Mill Creek Township brought the county to its present shape and size. So, to just say Putnam County, as we now know it, was formed on December 31, 1821 may not be telling the entire story.

I am excited about the possibilities available in this project, and especially the chance to work with so many talented and knowledgeable people. I hope we can make this happen. If you are interested, please contact Lisa at the museum.

Larry Tippin  
Putnam County Historian



Roachdale about 1910



# PRESIDENTIAL PONDERINGS

## IT IS DONE!



Our much anticipated new meeting room and exhibit space is complete.

We christened it with the 2018 Student Art Show which attracted 395 visitors on opening day! It also held our annual meeting in March with our guest speaker DePauw University President, Dr. Mark McCoy which, likewise, was a great success. Since its completion in February this new area has been the setting for everything from a memorial service to Snake Head Ed's reptile show. In May and June, it housed an 18' X 30' train display by the Pacific and Eastern Train Club. In September it will be the setting for a wedding. Now that is a true multipurpose room!

In another step forward, our parking lot is now extremely well illuminated thanks to new LED lights placed on our existing poles. This enhances the safety, beauty, and usability of our wonderful facility.

So...are we taking a break and basking in our success? No. We are looking to the future. At our annual meeting our treasurer, Murray Pride, announced our "Fab 15" fundraising drive for our building fund. Member and philanthropist Malcolm Romine has committed to donate \$15,000 a year for the next three years if we can raise a matching \$15,000. We were looking for 15 people (The Fab 15) to commit \$1,000 a year for the next 3 years to complete the match. We are getting close — we currently have 22 members of the Fab 15! We are more than 1 1/2 years into our contract to purchase our building. The contract runs for another 3+ years (at which time we will take over occupancy of the entire building) and will require a balloon payment of approximately \$360,000 at the end. Our Fab 15 effort will generate over \$100,000 to help refurbish our additional space. If you would like to become a member of our Fab 15 (or generously commit to picking up the \$360,000 balance at the end of our contract) contact Lisa or me.

Not only do we need your financial support, we also need your ideas. As I mentioned, in about 3 years and 3 months we will take over occupancy of the entire building — another 27,000 square feet! We are seeking your thoughts on how we should expand and use this new space. What would you like to see in the museum? Please give this some serious thought, jot down your ideas and send them to Lisa.

We have come a long way but we are not stopping here. If you would like to talk to us personally about your ideas, have your meeting here at the museum, or have a speaker or program for your meeting — again, just contact Lisa.

Warren Macy, President

# A TALE OF AN EARLY GREENCASTLE SETTLER AND A VERY OLD BUILDING

*Researched and Written by Diana LaViolette*

If you are a resident of Greencastle and wander downtown often, you might have noticed that there is a very old building sitting behind the law offices of Sharon Hammond. It is a rather dilapidated structure facing Indiana Street, which at first glance looks like it shares a common wall with the law office, but it does not. It is however fairly well documented that this structure holds the title of the oldest building in Greencastle, dating back to 1823.

Ms. Hammond became a contract owner of the property and building behind her office in 2006. She tells me that until November of 2016, there was a renter on the first floor of the old house. The actual size of the building is believed to be true to the original shape and size. Of course, there is little that we see on the roof exterior, which was in place 195 years ago. The corbels right under the roof however, are quite possibly original. What we do know is that a colonel Lewis H. Sands, in 1823, bought the property where the house sits. We might be handicapped as to the history of the building itself, but fortunate in knowing more about the man who first owned and occupied the space. It turns out Sands is rather fascinating character and worthy of our attention.

Putnam County was first organized by an act of the general assembly on December 31, 1821. (as an aside, we might want to start planning our two hundredth anniversary.) Greencastle Township was first settled in that year, and there is a long list of new arrivals in those first years. One of the first was colonel Sands, a young entrepreneur who in 1823 arrived bringing a box of goods in a one-horse carry from Louisville, Kentucky, looking for new horizons. He had served as a member of the Kentucky militia. Prior to his arrival in Putnam County he has experienced trading with the Indians at Fort Harrison, and along the Wabash. Upon arrival, he purchased property on the East end of the North side of the public square where he built a log store house which possibly sat where Sharon Hammond's office is now located, and we know he opened one of the first dry good stores in the area. Fortunately, the north side of Greencastle's central square has avoided a significant fire unlike the other three sides, which has helped to protect Greencastle's oldest building.



The first fifty years of Greencastle development was one of uninterrupted prosperity, thanks in part to men like Lewis Sands who served the public for a number of years and his store was recognized as one of the prominent features of the town and of the county. We know he was married to a Julia Lucas in 1827, and records reflect a daughter named Rebecca Sands, but that appears to be all we know about his family. He quickly became a successful businessman and politician in the area. He lived to see Greencastle develop from a group of log cabins in the wilderness to one

of the thriving and representative county seats in central Indiana. He was an Indian agent, an unflinching Douglas Democrat and a supporter of the North. Sands had a colorful personality, was liked by many, and was always involved in the politics and business of the community and the state.

Certainly Sands did not let grass grow under his feet, he was forever active and involved. As a militia colonel he was appointed by the US government in 1833 to have a lead role in removing the Potawatomi Indians from Indiana to a place west of the Mississippi.

That government ordered removal is a sad and well documented story, and one which reflects significant poor planning and mistreatment. It is also indicative of Sands' notoriety and the respect given to him by government officials.

The records reflect his many civic and community responsibilities. The Temple Masonic Lodge was organized in May of 1842, and yet again Lewis made the press, becoming a free mason. He served as the lodge's first secretary. The Masons met in the upper story of a frame building on the south side of the public square where Central National Bank was located. Greencastle's first post office was established on March 18, 1821, and Lewis H. Sands, was appointed in 1826 as its second postmaster and served until 1840. It is believed that the post office was then located in the building behind Ms. Hammond's office, which is likely where the dry goods were marketed. He was always active in Indiana Government and was a respected member of the community. In April, 1861, when the confederates fired on fort Sumter, He quickly opened a recruiting office to enlist volunteers. At a meeting held in the court house, he was called to the

*Continued on next page...*



# COMING EVENTS

## LOVE LETTERS

By A. R. Gurney

A fundraiser for the benefit of the  
Putnam County Museum



Performed by  
**Ben Dulaski  
&  
Karen Temple**

To be performed at the  
Putnam County Museum  
1105 N Jackson St  
Greencastle, IN 46135

*Live Theatre comes to the Museum. Get your tickets now!*

**Sat., Oct 6, at 8:00 P.M. \$10.00**

**Sun., Oct 7, at 1:00 P.M. \$20.00** (includes  
Brunch)

**Brunch by Almost Home**

Brunch served at 1:00

Performance at 2:00

**Reservations** may be made by calling  
the Putnam County Museum  
(765) 653-8419

*Limited Seating Available.*

**October 6th 9:00-5:00**

**Barn Again Workshop**

Call for more information 765 653-8419

**November**

**1st to the 20th Pacific and Eastern  
Railroad Model Trains Return!**

November is national Modeling Month. The Parks  
Department will be offering modeling classes each Tuesday  
evening of the month, at the museum.

WWW.PUTNAMCOUNTYMUSEUM.ORG

## Jewelry Roadshow with Steve Mason & Ann Rambo Oct 27th at 11:00 a.m.

Bring a piece of fine or costume jewelry you've wondered  
about. Ann and Steve will identify and comment on crafts-  
manship, makers, age, rarity and other aspects of all types of  
jewelry. Bring in your favorite piece or come for the educa-  
tion and entertainment. This program is free and open to  
the public.



## December

Member Holiday Party – Date to be determined!

31st Roaring 20's New Year's Eve Mystery

## Museum adds new BLOG page to website

Blogs can feature all types of subjects, but this particular  
blog, written by Putnam County historian Larry Tippin fo-  
cuses on one subject; the history of Putnam County, Indiana.

The individual blog posts fea-  
ture a variety of stories about  
the people, places and things  
of Putnam County history  
that are informative, inter-  
esting, and historical. They  
are rich in factual detail and  
make for fascinating reading!

We are thrilled with this vir-  
tual addition to the treasures  
of our Museum, and are be-  
yond grateful to Mr. Tippin  
for his contribution.

To go to the new blog:  
<https://www.putnamcountymuseum.org/blog>



Larry Tippin, County Historian

765-653-8419

ment) and was shipped off to division maneuvers near Camp  
Polk, La. for more training. His combat assignment was to  
carry ammunition for a five-man 60 millimeter mortar squad.

Throughout the rest of November and into Decem-  
ber, the 44th Division pursued the retreating enemy through  
the Vosges Mountains in heavy fighting, pushing back  
enemy troops from the French Maginot Line to the German  
Siegfried Line and capturing key towns along the way. The  
weather remained a major obstacle, as rain turned to snow,  
slowing the advance of the allied troops. At times the Ger-  
mans counter-attacked, and John barely escaped an assault  
by German Panzer tanks at Schallbach, which rolled over an  
American position several hundred yards away. "A foot sol-  
dier has little protection against a machine," John observed.  
"If you stayed you were hit, if you ran you were hit. Thus G  
Company on our right was practically exterminated." When  
John finally had time to write his parents, he said, quite sim-  
ply, "I've been seeing and taking part in the real thing. It has  
been terribly hard and grueling. I can now realize why the  
veterans never talk much."

The Allied assault through the Vosges continued  
into December, with a major battle fought over the city of  
Enchenberg, located on a high ridge, a strong enemy fortress.  
The Germans fought fiercely, inflicting many casualties, forc-  
ing the Second Battalion to retreat. "Whatever happened to  
our wounded I do not know," John reported, "as they had  
been removed by the Germans. Johnny Engel was presumed  
dead. That same day 'Snuffy' Coffman was killed and Yon-  
kers of the Second Platoon badly hit. We had only two in my  
active squad now, Melgoza and myself."

Four days later John's company was walking down a  
railroad track in the dark when "quite suddenly two shells hit  
right between our third and fourth platoons. As I was hitting  
the ground I saw a blinding flash and felt a terrific wallop on  
my head. I had been struck by a shell fragment, which had  
gone through my steel helmet and helmet liner. I was dazed a  
few seconds. I just didn't know what to do. Everyone seemed  
to be crying for medics and mingling around. The two shells  
wounded 19 of us from E Company; the entire barrage took  
many more from the battalion." John was fortunate. His steel  
helmet had saved his life, but after only 24 hours of rest he  
was sent back to the front. On Dec. 15 he wrote his parents  
that they should expect a package containing the Order of  
the Purple Heart. With characteristic understatement he  
told them, "now please for heaven's sake don't worry," for  
the wound was "nothing more than hitting my head on a  
pantry door – and they up and give me the Purple Heart."

He closed his letter with "The Purple Heart is a very old  
and honored award, and I will always treasure it. Love, good  
night, and healthily yours, John."

But John was not healthy. His feet had gotten much  
worse. "I could not walk well without stumbling. The toes  
were numb and turning a grayish blue." Once more he went  
to the battalion aid station, but got no help. "Dead skin" was  
their answer for the discoloring. It all came to a head a week  
later, when the Third Platoon went on night patrol close to  
the German lines. Along the way John had "such a terrific  
time stumbling along that I fell back from the squad." Alone  
in the woods, he spotted several trees on top of a hill and  
went there to wait out the night. "We were right on German  
lines and it would have been foolhardy to try and find any  
of our lines in pitch dark. So with occasional artillery shells  
and flares playing around in the sky, I spent the night out in  
nowhere. I was too tired and sick to even care to stay awake  
and watch for enemy. So I curled up on the ground, sporadi-  
cally slept without daring to take any equipment off." At

*Continued on page 4...*



John J. Baughman, DePauw '48, (second from left) with fellow soldiers.

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